IMPLEMENTATION OF YEAR-ROUND
EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1995

To the memory of my father, John W. (Jay) Ruis, the finest man I will ever know. His love and encouragement live on through the achievement of this milestone in my life.

I am deeply grateful to my parents who modeled a dedication to hard work and an unwavering commitment to those they love. Special acknowledgments are given to my children, Marci, Joanna, and Bryce who have provided the inspiration to continue this work. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude with my wife, Dottie, for her constant faith, strength, and abiding love.

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May 1995

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This study focused on the use of program-related and
organizational practices in U. S. public middle schools that
have implemented Year-Round Education (YRE) approaches. Data
were obtained from a sample of 127 middle school principals
whose schools were operating on a year-round calendar during
the 1993-94 school year.

Each principal was mailed a questionnaire to determine
their (a) self-reported use of 18 middle school program
practices in their school, (b) use of a variety of middle
school and YRE organizational schemes, and (c) perceptions
regarding facilitating and constraining factors in program
implementation. Seventy-one of the principals, representing
a 56% return rate, responded to the questionnaire.

The findings in this study suggest that the use of
middle school curriculum practices are not significantly
impeded by year-round scheduling formats, but that practices
related to instructional organization, teacher guidance,
instructional methodology, and orientation and articulation

are less prevalent in year-round programs. Principals reported a wide range of use for both middle school and YRE organizational schemes; over three-fourths of the respondents indicated the concurrent use of various scheduling options. Principals described their concerns regarding scheduling flexibility and curricular restrictions. They also reported that YRE intersessions were beneficial in reducing stress on teachers and students.

The results of this study suggest that many of the practices recommended by experts were used in the middle schools. Organizational and design characteristics reported by year-round high schools were also reported by the middle school principals. Based on the results of this study, further research should be undertaken to investigate YRE options in conjunction with program design and implementation procedures.

Background and Context of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify common program-related and organizational practices used in U.S. public middle schools that had implemented Year Round Education (YRE) approaches. The rationale for this investigation was generated by two recent trends in American education. First, in the past decade there had been renewed interest in the concept of YRE. Interest in YRE had accelerated by the public's demand for excellence in education, more accountability, and better ways of teaching and learning (Mizwicki, 1990). Second, over the past three decades, the number of middle schools had greatly increased. With over 10,000 middle schools currently operating in the U.S. and the number continuing to grow (George & Alexander, 1993), the emergence of middle grade schools is now widespread.

Although enrollments declined during the 1970s and early 1980s, during the late eighties and early nineties, the population of school-aged children increased. By 1987, the U.S. Census Bureau reported there were more preschool-aged children than there had been since the late sixties (Florida Department of Education, 1993). Today, those children are in elementary schools. Change in enrollments and a lack of

resources affected schools' ability to accommodate student population growth. Voter rejection of school bond proposals as well as an inability to raise taxes for new school construction limited efforts to accommodate this growth (Howell, 1986). To solve space and financial problems, many school districts implemented YRE.

In 1991-92, the National Association of Year-Round Education indicated that 78% of year-round institutions were elementary schools. Most elementary schools utilize the self-contained classroom format, because YRE is relatively easy to implement (Stiff, 1986). Beyond the sixth grade, YRE becomes a less inviting option. The vast majority of U.S. schools using year-round calendars are elementary, but about 250 secondary schools have also switched to a year-round calendar (Florida Department of Education, 1993). The YRE concept has been recognized for promoting flexibility in scheduling, improved curricular offerings, increased time for teaching, and novelty. In contrast, some researchers have cautioned about the limitations associated with implementing YRE at the secondary level. Mussatti (1981) suggested that sequencing and course continuity created serious curricular problems at the high school level, while Larsen (1991) reported that preserving or expanding elective courses became difficult when implementing YRE at junior high schools.

The organizational design of the middle school permits the development of unique programs and experiences. However, to facilitate program development, the middle school

organization must present a flexible approach that provides special learning opportunities that are tailored to the characteristics and needs of early adolescents. The nature of the middle school is centered around components that address academic learning, personal development, and group citizenship (George & Alexander, 1993).

Literature on YRE program implementation has focused primarily on cost-effectiveness models, attitudinal surveys, and feasibility studies for individual school districts (see Baker, 1990; Christie, 1989; Hill, 1980; Jennings, 1989; Long 1982). More recent arguments emphasizing the educational advantages of YRE have not yielded data that justify these claims (Gilroy, 1990; Utah Foundation, 1990). Wolfe (1993) reported that implementation of YRE created difficulties in scheduling not generally associated with traditional calendar schools. Clearly, relatively little is known at this time about the effects of YRE on the middle school program. Young and Berger (1983) observed that comprehensive evaluations of year-round schedule implementation have been quite limited, and previous studies about the influence of YRE programs on program effectiveness have been tangential in nature. Hough and Zykowski (1989) noted that perhaps the most significant issue, yet to be addressed, is "the degree to which a school reconstructs the curricula and instruction to meet the unique design of various YRE programs" (p. 37). With the anticipation of increased numbers of elementary level students entering middle schools, research focused on the

program implications of YRE at the middle school level is a timely endeavor.

<div align="center">Purpose of the Study</div>

The purpose of the study was to identify common program-related and organizational practices utilized in middle schools which had implemented year-round education. The following research questions were addressed:

1) What program practices are prevalent to middle schools operating on a year-round calendar?

2) What organizational practices appear to be common to middle schools operating on a year-round calendar?

3) What were the factors that principals reported as facilitating and constraining program implementation of a year-round schedule?

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

A definition of the terms used in this study is provided below.

An <u>advisory or advisor - advisee progra</u>m is a regularly scheduled teacher-based guidance program that offers an opportunity for social and emotional education. Teachers engage with students on a weekly basis in activities related to personal and/or societal issues.

<u>Cross-tracking or track jumping</u> is a method used when there is an insufficient number of students interested in a particular curricular offering or program in a specific

track. Students must jump to another track in order to participate in certain curricular programs.

The underlined interdisciplinary team organizational plan permits teachers to share the same group of students in more than one academic area. These teachers and students share the same schedule and the same area of the building. Teams of teachers are responsible for planning, teaching, and evaluating curriculum and instruction in more than one academic area. Teachers have common planning time so that they can coordinate and plan for instruction across subjects.

Intersessions are periods of time when students are "off track."

The middle school program is planned and operated to serve the educational needs of students who are 10-14 years of age that are enrolled in grades 6-8 or 5-8. This program is designed to (a) provide guidance and counseling of students, (b) offer scheduling and grouping practices that complement instructional design, and (c) curriculum and instructional practices which meet the needs of early adolescent learners.

The middle school program implementation is the process of planning for the implementation of a practice(s) designated as characteristic of the middle school approach.

A multi-track schedule is used in schools that have an over-enrollment of students for the available space. Groups of students are rotated intermittently with other groups on a 12-month calendar in order to stagger schedules and

vacations, allowing additional space in the school year-round.

Students in <u>rainbow classes</u> take courses that were not available on their track. Students from all tracks may enroll in rainbow classes.

A <u>school-within-a-school</u> is an organization which creates a microcosm of the total school in each separate area of the school. Students and teachers are divided into groups or tracks of approximately the same size, and are assigned to the same schedules for a particular group or track. This plan is used for both the traditional calendar and YRE middle school.

The <u>single-track schedule</u> is an expansion of the traditional schedule to 12 months. All students on a single-track schedule are on vacation or in school at the same time. Single-track year-round schools do not result in a reduction of school size nor do they accommodate more students at one site.

A <u>track</u> is a schedule for attendance and vacation which may be viewed as a school within-a-school. Students are assigned to one track based on course requirements and/or special-program considerations.

A <u>traditional school calendar (TSC)</u> is a continuous school program offered in a nine-month period of time consisting of approximately 180 school days. All teachers and students in the school program take a vacation during the summer months

<u>Year-round education (YRE)</u> is a school program that staggers attendance of students and staff over a twelve month period. Programs are designed to promote educational improvement and the utilization of school buildings at or near capacity throughout the full calendar year.

A <u>year-round schedule or calenda</u>r is the attendance cycle of a particular year-round program. Numerous variations exist that distribute instructional sessions over a 12-month period where calendar configurations determine the attendance assignments of students and teachers.

<u>YRE approaches</u> are practices that relate to the organizational components that occur when scheduling the design of YRE. These approaches include attendance cycles, intersession curricular opportunities, and flexible scheduling that provides for exploratory mini-courses.

Significance of the Study

During the last ten years of unprecedented student enrollment growth, YRE has emerged as a promising solution to overcrowding and effective facility use (Florida School Board Association, 1990). Concurrently, a large number of boards of education, state legislatures, and other citizen groups have begun to focus attention on educational issues related to the implementation of YRE. At least twenty states have passed legislation that would allow for some form of year-round education (Mizwicki, 1990).

On a national level, the middle school program has become an important part of American education. The Carnegie

Council on Adolescent Development (1989) reported the need for improvements in the middle school grades. Jackson and Hornbeck (1989) highlighted the relationship between an appropriate middle school education, the American economy, demographics of our nation's children, and the risks facing young people today. Educators and policy makers were beginning to recognize that the middle school may be central to helping students succeed and stay in school (Epstein & MacIver, 1990). The middle school approach had traditionally been used as a means for managing classroom space that has little to do with program design or with the needs of middle school students (Gough, 1990). The importance of studying implementation of year-round education in the middle school is underscored by the need to find ways to effectively accommodate growth in school-age populations.

Perhaps the most significant implication of this research rests with the insights that might be offered to practitioners who are planning to implement year-round education in their middle schools. Those who advocate the need to improve middle school programs (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Cawelti, 1988; Epstein & MacIver, 1990; Irwin, 1990) suggest that there is a need to inform practitioners and decision-makers about the program design of middle schools. In conjunction with a resurgence of YRE, school administrators and supervisors could benefit from a better understanding of the design characteristics of middle school programs which have been implemented in a year-

round setting. An analysis of the various organizational and program practices of year-round middle schools will enable educators to systematically evaluate the effects of YRE programs on middle school practices. The findings of this study might also guide decisions about program design and the organization of middle school curriculum and activities.

Delimitations

Research for this study was delimited to an analysis of survey responses received from U. S. public middle schools identified in the <u>Twentieth Reference Directory of Year-Round Education Programs 1993-94 School Yea</u>r (National Association of Year-Round Education, 1993), that included schools with the following grade spans: (1) K-8; (2) K-12; (3) 5-8; (4) 6-7; (5) 7th; (6) 6-8; (7) 7-8; and (8) 7-9. Excluded were elementary schools (e.g. K-6), high schools (e.g., 9-12), other schools that do not include grade 7, and private or parochial schools. Descriptive statements were made only about the grade level practices that occurred in schools which were listed in the NAYRE directory and contained grade 7.

Limitations

1.   The results of this study are considered formative.
     There were no attempts to judge the value of a program
     on the basis of the survey outcomes.

2.   Attempts to establish reliability for the survey
     instrument were not performed in the context of the
     study. Since reliability provides the consistency that

makes validity possible, it is acknowledged that without establishing reliability for the survey instrument, attempts to ensure validity are somewhat limited.

3. The method of investigation in this study relied on school principals' reported use of middle school and YRE program practices. The generalizability of this study is limited to the survey respondents.

<u>Assumptions</u>

For the purpose of conducting this study, it was assumed that respondents to the "Survey of Year-Round Programs in the Middle Schools" were candid and responded truthfully. Further, it was assumed that the schools identified for participation in the study have implemented YRE programs to solve space problems or for some educational advantage or benefit. This researcher also assumed that schools including grade 7 were more likely to use practices recommended for responsive middle school education than other grade organizations, and that the frequently reported implementation of middle school practices supported the social, personal, and academic development of early adolescents.

Further, it was accepted that schools of different grade spans offer different programs and some schools with different grade organizations implement similar programs. Given the choices of attendance periods that are available to YRE schools, it was assumed that calendar cycles employed by

the schools surveyed were determined by local factors and needs.

Summary

The overall purpose of this study was to identify common program-related and organizational practices of middle schools that had implemented YRE. The impetus for this study was motivated by an interest in how the middle school concept is affected by YRE practices, and a need to understand how YRE impacts the middle school program. A survey research approach, a technique used to describe the characteristics of a population in order to investigate educational problems, was used (Borg & Gall, 1983). The survey instrument was administered to principals of public middle schools currently implementing a YRE program. Descriptive analyses were utilized to assess their responses.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study was designed to investigate the program
practices of U.S. middle schools that had implemented YRE
approaches. The purpose of this chapter is to present a
review of historical trends and status of middle grade and
YRE program implementation. This chapter is divided into two
sections: (1) Year-Round Education in the U.S. and (2)
development of the middle school concept.

Year Round Education in the U.S.

The purpose of this section is to (1) provide an
overview of the historical background of YRE, (2) describe
the status of YRE in Florida, (3) describe YRE program
implementation approaches, (4) discuss YRE practices relative
to program implementation, and (5) YRE organizational program
design concerns and scheduling options.

Historical Background of YRE

Although a nine-month calendar was the standard for most
schools by 1915, YRE programs existed in the early 1900s in a
variety of communities. In 1904, Bluffton, Indiana, began a
program to improve curriculum and learning and provide
student and family options. In Newark, New Jersey, YRE was
implemented to help immigrants learn English and to enable
students to accelerate. For the purpose of meeting the needs

of laggards, Minot, North Dakota, adopted a year-round school
calendar in 1917. In 1925, Omaha, Nebraska, implemented YRE
to offer continuous vocational training programs. The
following year, Nashville, Tennessee, provided YRE for the
purpose of improving the quality of education. The
implementation of YRE in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, in 1928,
occurred as an effort to increase the amount of available
space. However, the exact nature of these programs and their
typical calendar organization remains unclear. Whether the
programs were year-round or extended summer schools are
impossible to determine, though, some adjustments to the
school calendar did occur (Wolfe, 1993).

Few of the early adoptions survived the depression of
the 1930s and World War II because many high school students
graduated early, were too young for regular employment, and
were not old enough to enroll in college. The acceleration
did not adequately prepare a student for college or work
(Howell, 1988). Following World War II, there was an
increase in the school-age population that resulted in an
overcrowding of school facilities. Some school districts
attempted to adopt a year-round calendar in order to avoid
new construction costs. Although numerous tax increases and
bond issues were passed to meet expanding facility needs, the
nine-month calendar was so firmly entrenched that most
parents did not want to abandon the idea of summer vacation
(Muzio et al., 1977). During the 1960s, some school
districts experimented with year-round schools in an attempt

to improve the curriculum, while some school administrators
hoped to save on energy costs by trying the year-round
calendar (National School Public Relations Association,
1977). From 1955 to 1960, 17 communities conducted
feasibility studies on YRE. The Fairfield, Connecticut,
community rejected the adoption of an 11-month, year-round
calendar because they felt that social and administrative
disadvantages outweighed the advantages. The Houston, Texas,
area studied a trimester plan for future implementation,
while Montgomery County, Alabama, and DeKalb and Fulton
counties in Georgia investigated a staggered four-quarter
plan (Shephard & Baker, 1977). Over the past 70 years,
although the number of schools involved in YRE has waxed and
waned, implementation has been confined to a relatively few
districts. A rebirth of YRE began in 1969-71 and programs
began to emerge in mid-western states (Howell, 1988).
Beginning in 1969, YRE programs were instituted by
communities in California, Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri
(Glines, 1987).

A major breakthrough for the YRE movement occurred in
1969 in St. Charles, Missouri. This program achieved
national recognition for improved cost savings and more
effective utilization of space. In that same year, the
Valley View School District in Romeoville, Illinois, mandated
that all students attend year-round schools. This program
was considered a milestone for YRE; subsequently many school
districts patterned their YRE programs after the Valley View

model (Glines & Bingle, 1991). By 1976, YRE peaked with approximately 1.5 million students attending over 500 year-round schools in 28 states. The largest concentration of YRE schools was in California (Shepherd & Baker, 1977). Between 1976 and 1980, the number of year-round schools steadily declined from 539 to 287 (National Education Association, 1987) due to decreasing enrollments and school closings.

From 1980 to 1986, a resurgence of YRE was evident (National Education Association, 1987). The "baby boomlet" of the 1980s prompted many school districts to study, examine, and implement the concept of YRE (Mizwicki, 1990). Between 1984 and 1989, Utah established over fifty year-round schools to meet the demands of a rapidly growing population (Utah Foundation, 1990). Entering the 1990s, California established itself as the leader in YRE with 106 districts operating year-round programs. Texas recently surpassed Utah in having the second largest population of year-round programs. Twenty-one other states, including Arizona, Colorado, Florida and Nevada, have either maintained programs or developed a new interest in the YRE concept (National Association of Year-Round Education, 1992). While the vast majority of U.S. schools using year-round calendars are elementary, about 250 secondary schools have also switched to a year-round calendar, including schools in Los Angeles and Utah (National Association of Year-Round Education, 1992). Many states have revised statutes pertaining to public education to accommodate a year-round calendar. In contrast,

many state statutes prohibit schools from operating year-round, while others foster the YRE concept. Several states have even offered incentives for its implementation (Hough & Zykowski, 1989). Florida, California, Hawaii, Utah, and Texas are among the states that adopted legislation offering incentives for YRE program development (Mizwicki, 1990).

Status of YRE in Florida

The YRE movement in Florida has vacillated much like it has in other states. Many districts exhibited an interest in YRE during the early 1970s. For example, Dade, Pasco, and Palm Beach counties adopted YRE plans between 1973 and 1976. These programs were eventually phased out as a result of economic reasons, political decisions, and personal conflict among decision-makers (Mizwicki, 1990).

Currently, there are eight county school districts that have year-round schools: Brevard, Duval, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia counties. Prior to 1990, the Marion County School District (Ocala) had the only school in the state of Florida implementing YRE. In 1991, Orange County began a plan to phase in all elementary schools to a year-round schedule. Beginning with the 1992-93 school year, 39 elementary schools operated on a year-round schedule and five Volusia County schools were scheduled to begin the year-round format in 1993-94. Three middle schools began the 1992-93 school year on year-round schedules and four Seminole County schools were slated to begin YRE in 1993-94 (Florida Department of Education, 1993).

Florida's public school population, while growing steadily since the early 1980s, is expected to continue to expand through the 1990s and beyond. The vast majority of increased student enrollments are expected in the elementary and subsequently middle schools (Florida Department of Education, 1990). Current student growth estimates indicated that an additional 74 middle schools would be needed if new school construction was the only strategy to reduce overcrowding (Florida Department of Education, 1993). Projections of student growth and facility needs prompted the creation of a task force to study and make recommendations for state and local school districts pertaining to cost savings and enhancing performance. Partners in Productivity, created under an Executive Order of the Governor of Florida, was commissioned to identify, implement and reward major cost savings and performance enhancements in state government (Partners in Productivity, 1989). This group was a manifestation of a public and private cooperative effort driven by the Florida Tax Commission and the Florida Council of 100.

From the late 1970s to the late 1980s it was estimated that state spending for public schools increased from 1.9 billion dollars to 4.8 billion dollars. During this same time period, public school enrollment rose from 1,613,434 to 1,877,527 with a commensurate increase in per student spending from $1,999 to $2,542. Assuming that population increases continue as projected, an additional 758 schools

(475 elementary schools, 184 middle schools, and 99 high schools) will be needed in Florida during the 1990s. The cost of building new schools and maintaining existing ones in the nineties is expected to be over 20 billion dollars, compared to the 6 billion dollars spent during the previous 10 years (Partners in Productivity, 1989).

The Partners in Productivity recommended 60 specific actions to state and local school districts to reform K-12 public education. The task force made several key recommendations involving YRE, use of facilities, and program implementation. Included in these recommendations was the legislative approval of a funding formula to promote and reward improved utilization of facilities (i.e., year-round schools and multi-purpose schools). The task force also proposed that local school districts project how much of their 10-year educational facilities needs could be met through more effective utilization of existing facilities, including year-round schools. Partners in Productivity recommended that a comprehensive master plan for K-12 capital facilities for the next decade be developed to integrate requirements and guidelines for cost-effective design, siting, constructing and financing new schools, restructuring, and expanding the use of technology in the classroom.

In addition to the recommendations for capital facilities, Partners in Productivity proposed actions for enhancing programs that would create more flexibility in the

K-12 system. A review of how dropouts are processed through the K-12 educational system included a careful review of each district's policies to ensure that students were not inadvertently "pushed" out of schools. Partners in Productivity urged the authorization of part-time schooling for students who (1) had severe time constraints due to employment, (2) needed to support a child, or (3) who could perform better with a reduced or flexible workload. The task force recommended using an extended school day as a strategy to diminish the number of student dropouts. The concept was viewed as a means of allowing students to work, while enabling them to attend school by taking courses on Saturdays or during the summer.

The significance of these recommendations, in the context of this study, lies in their support of the flexibility offered by YRE. The Partners in Productivity viewed YRE as a means to improve facility utilization and as a strategy that would increase the flexibility of programs to better meet the needs of a diverse student population. The need to review organizational schemes and program articulation processes is implicit in their recommendations. Their suggestions indicate that changes in the use of facilities should be viewed in conjunction with program design and implementation.

As a result of the recommendations by the Partners in Productivity, the 1990 Florida Legislature added a new subsection to the Florida Statutes, 233.435, that established

a separate account named the Increased Utilization Account.
As part of the Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) and
Debt Service Trust Fund, this account provides qualifying
school districts $100 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student
per eligible school site for a maximum of five years. To
qualify, an individual school's unweighted FTE must exceed
facility capacity by at least 20 per cent during the prior
year. Additionally this increase must be attributable to a
school using a modified school calendar approach to year-
round school utilization (Florida Department of Education,
1993).

In 1990, the legislature added 1.5 million dollars to
the appropriations bill for allocations to renovate during
the 1990-91 school year. These funds were allocated to
school districts of existing K-12 schools that sought to
maximize the use of their facilities, but needed remodeling
in order to make the transition to a year-round school
program. Additionally, Florida Statute 236.081 was amended
in 1990 to authorize the State Commissioner of Education to
adjust student funding eligibility and criteria to ensure
that students attending year-round schools receive parity
with students attending non-year-round schools.

Legislation has provided the impetus for YRE in Florida
and, as a result, the opportunity for program implementation
has become more inviting and feasible. The renewed interest
in the concept of YRE in the past decade, however, has been
accelerated to provide more efficient use of facilities to

address increasing enrollments and by the public's demand for excellence in education. YRE has the potential to permit increased demonstration of accountability and better ways of teaching and learning (Mizwicki, 1990).

YRE Program Implementation Approaches

In a year-round program, the school year is rescheduled to accommodate more students, to utilize the facilities more efficiently, and/or to provide for more varieties of learning experiences. Children in year-round schools are not in attendance for fifty-two weeks. Instead, the students attend school for the same number of days as those students on a traditional nine-month calendar, with attendance spread out over twelve months (Muzio et al., 1977). The YRE concept provides several options for restructuring the school year to implement curricular programs. Many of the existing year-round calendars realign the school year into periods of instruction followed by vacations called intersessions, while other calendars extend the school year to provide more days or to provide greater availability of instruction. Examples of year-round calendars designed by school districts across the nation are described below.

45-15 single-track plan. All students in the school attend class for 45 days and then have 15 days of vacation. Under this plan, the school year is divided into four nine-week periods, separated by four three-week vacations called intersessions. Overall, the year is divided into 36 weeks in school, 12 weeks out of school, and 4 holiday weeks. This

45-15 plan is not designed to save space, but to interrupt the long summer vacation period (Ballinger et al., 1987).

45-15 multiple-track plan. In the 45-15 multiple-track plan, students are divided into two to four groups, and are rotated through nine-week learning and three-week vacation blocks. The rotation occurs every three weeks, so that 25 per cent of the students start school every 15 days. Teachers usually follow the track schedule of their students, but can be reassigned to another track, thereby lengthening their contract year. This plan is most frequently used by year-round schools in Florida (Mizwicki, 1990).

60-20 plan. The 60-20 plan is a variation of the 45-15 plan in which students attend school for 60 days and then vacation for 20 days. Students rotate throughout the year until they have had three 60 day terms and three 20 day vacations. Conducted in either a single-track or multi-track format, this plan offers a compromise for those who prefer longer teaching and vacation periods and are not wedded to traditional quarter or semester calendars (Ballinger et al., 1987).

60-15 plan. In this plan the instructional period is 60 days and the vacation period is 15 days. A common summer vacation of three to four weeks can be given to all students and faculty by rearranging the instructional days. The 60-15 plan can be implemented with a single or multiple-track format (Ballinger et al., 1987).

90-30 plan. This plan also can be conducted with a single or multiple-track format. The schedule includes two 90-day semesters separated by a 30-day vacation period. Schools are closed during the traditional winter holiday period and spring vacation (Ballinger et al., 1987).

Concept 6 plan. Used successfully at both the elementary and secondary levels, the Concept 6 plan is particularly useful when there is a lack of space. The format usually consists of six 40- to 44-day learning blocks in which students attend four of the six terms, including attendance in two successive terms. Under this plan, the school day is usually lengthened to equal the minutes of instruction that are found in a 180 day school year. The year can be summarized as 32 weeks in school, 16 weeks out of school and 4 holiday weeks (Ballinger et al., 1987).

Trimester plan. Similar to the 60-20 plan, the trimester plan uses three instructional periods of 60 days each with flexible vacation periods that vary from 2 to 6 weeks. The trimester plan uses three instructional periods of 60 days each. (Ballinger et al., 1987).

Quarter plan. This was the first year-round calendar implemented in the early 1900s after the nationwide adoption of the common nine-month school year. Under this plan, the curriculum is organized so that each quarter is a separate entity and courses begin and end at each 12-week period. The quarter plan divides the calendar into four 12-week periods in fall, winter, spring, and summer. Students select, or are

assigned to, any combination of three to four quarters
(Ballinger et al., 1987).

Quinmester plan. Most often used at the secondary level
for grades nine through 12, the quinmester plan features five
9 week terms with the school year ranging up to 220 days.
Vacation periods average about seven weeks and students are
required to attend four of the five 9 week terms. The
quinmester plan often operates on a single-track pattern
(Ballinger et al., 1987).

Five-track, five-term plan. This plan utilizes five
45-minute day instructional periods, with students attending
four of the five periods for a total of 180 days. The five-
track, five-term plan is used on a multi-track basis with a
common summer break of approximately 3 weeks for all students
(Ballinger et al., 1987).

Flexible all-year plan. This plan calls for school to
be opened for a base period of 240 days. Students are
required to attend the minimum number of days designated by
each state. Students have three options: 1) they may attend
all 240 days for additional learning opportunities; 2) they
may attend only the required number of days and spread these
days over the 240 that instruction is available; or 3) they
can insist on the traditional nine-month calendar, by
starting on a set date in September and finishing in June,
completing the required number of days (Ballinger et al.,
1987).

Orchard plan. Originated in Utah, the orchard plan is virtually the same as the 60-15 calendar. This five-track plan varies from the 60-15 plan by allowing students to move in and out of self-contained classrooms instead of rotating entire classes. Each classroom carries a 120 per cent student load, however, with one track (20%) always on vacation. One advantage of this plan is that teachers are able to stay in their respective classrooms instead of moving every term (Wolfe, 1993).

YRE requires a reorganization of the school year, is designed to promote educational improvement, and promotes the use of school buildings at or near capacity throughout the full calendar year. Basically, the year-round calendar is organized into instructional blocks and vacation periods that are evenly distributed across 12 months. The traditional three-month summer vacation is divided into a number of shorter vacations called intersessions. YRE programs are sometimes referred to as modified school calendar programs, continuous learning programs, or simply as year-round school. (Florida School Boards Association, 1990). There are two different forms of year-round education: single-track and multi-track.

Single-track YRE is utilized to provide a continuous period of instruction. It is purported to minimize the learning loss that occurs during the TSC three-month vacation. All students and school personnel follow the same

schedule and have the same number of instructional days as the TSC year (Crane School District, 1991).

In addition to its perceived educational value, the multi-track program is used to accommodate overcrowding. It was designed to avoid extremes in scheduling such as double sessions and the extended school day, when some students arrived at school very early in the morning and other students left school very late in the afternoon or evening. The multi-track program divides students and teachers into groups or tracks of approximately the same size. Each track is assigned a different schedule with different vacation periods. Teachers and students assigned to a particular track follow the same schedule, creating a school-within-a-school concept (Crane School District, 1991).

In multi-track plans, students are divided into two to five groups, depending on enrollment and the attendance cycle selected, so that available space increases by 20% to 50% without building new facilities. For example, in a four-track version of the 45-15 plan, three groups (A, B & C) are in school while one (D) is on vacation. When the group (D) on vacation returns, one group (A) goes on vacation. The rotation continues every three weeks, thus providing for 25% additional space in the school. Many kinds of calendars are possible, depending on enrollment and number of days students are required to attend and year-round schedules are normally designed to meet local conditions and requirements (Ballinger et al., 1987).

YRE Practices Relative to Program Implementation

The year-round school curriculum does not differ markedly from that of the traditional school year program, Quinlan et al., (1987) reported. In a year-round study of education programs in California, the year-round calendar had little effect on the curriculum taught or the instructional methods used by teachers. Very few modifications were necessary to fit the curriculum to the year-round calendar, while some teachers believed that it was easier to plan the curriculum in the various segments of the year-round calendar.

One important advantage attributed to YRE programs is the increased flexibility schools have had in meeting students' needs. YRE programs have been reported to be especially helpful to students who are educationally disadvantaged, learning disabled, mentally / physically / emotionally handicapped, have limited English-speaking abilities, are enrolled in migrant and Chapter I programs, or who are otherwise at risk. Year-round schools have accommodated students who need additional instruction by assigning them to classes during their vacation period (Quinlan et al., 1987; Florida School Board Association, 1990). Another advantage of the YRE programs is the intersession periods which allow time for creative projects, peer tutoring, special writing seminars, and other methods of instruction. However, severely overcrowded schools cannot offer intersessions because of space limitations.

Though most school districts have turned to YRE to solve space and financial problems, YRE advocates have recently attempted to promote YRE by emphasizing its educational advantages. Year-Round Education school districts in various parts of the U.S. have reported greater levels of student retention. These gains have been attributed to the shortened vacation periods and more continuous learning opportunities afforded by YRE. The continuity of instruction that is characteristic of YRE has been highlighted as a means for addressing the unique needs of students in a rapidly changing society (Florida School Boards Association, 1990).

Several educational advantages have been cited by YRE advocates pertaining to YRE implementation. The most visible argument is YRE's claim to improve academic achievement. Summarily, research data on YRE's effect on academic achievement appears to be too limited to report conclusive findings. Findings consistently indicate, however, that YRE benefits students with learning disadvantages (Wolfe, 1993). Some of the most commonly mentioned educational advantages of YRE have been identified as influencing program effectiveness. These advantages include increased opportunities for (1) continuous learning, (2) summer employment, (3) family vacations, (4) additional space for varied educational needs, (5) school restructuring, (6) community enhancement, and (7) a continuous home-role model for poverty level students (Glines, 1991).

Provision of make-up opportunities has been cited as an advantage of YRE. Improvements in student behavior have been attributed to the shortened vacation periods interspersed during the year. Students and teachers have also reported that shorter school sessions reduce stress and that they return to school more refreshed and energetic (Utah Foundation, 1990).

YRE has evolved into a viable educational plan to meet the needs of students and community. YRE appears to help meet the needs of a diverse student population by providing flexibility in instruction and curriculum, enhancing recreation and employment opportunities, and as a means to improve facility utilization. These advantages, however, seem to be tangential in nature when attempting to review organizational schemes and program articulation processes, (Hough & Zykowski, 1989). The educational advantages cited above imply that enhancements of program structure and implementation occur through YRE, though they do not specify the organizational schemes and program articulation processes involved. Changes in the school calendar or use of facilities should be viewed in conjunction with existing program design and practices. As Hough and Zykowski (1989) observe, the most significant issue, yet to be addressed, is "the degree to which a school reconstructs the curricula and instruction to meet the unique design of various YRE programs" (p. 37).

YRE Organizational and Program Design Concerns

While YRE is most easily implemented at the elementary
level, it becomes a less inviting option beyond the sixth
grade (Stiff, 1986). This argument is supported by data from
NAYRE (1991-92) which indicated that 78% of year-round
schools operate at the elementary level. Stiff (1986)
attributed this finding to the self-contained classroom
format where students are able to occupy and vacate
classrooms more readily, and already in place in most
elementary schools. In contrast, Stiff (1986) reported that
the departmentalized organization of junior and senior high
schools makes it more difficult to manage tracks effectively
as the number of students moving from room to room increases.
In 1991, the Crane School District (Yuma, Arizona) reported
that YRE appeared to create scheduling problems for junior
and senior high schools. Problems arose with a loss of
scheduling flexibility. These problems were remedied from a
movement towards setting up a series of short duration
exploratory classes such as industrial arts, art, food,
clothing, general music, health, or typing (Crane School
District, 1991).

The classroom/scheduling adjustment that is possible in
elementary school becomes difficult in middle and high
school, especially in advanced/specialized courses. The
ideal solution stresses individualized instruction and
flexible scheduling, such as courses broken up into mini-
courses (Howell, 1986). Quinlan et al., (1987) acknowledged

that in some instances the educational program has suffered
from combined classes because there were insufficient numbers
of students at given grade levels to support separate classes
on each track. Districts have devised creative solutions to
this problem through the use of cross-tracking, special
intersession courses, or smaller than usual classes which is
a costly alternative (Larsen, 1991).

Stiff (1986) reported that a junior high school which is
organized on the core concept is more compatible than one
organized in the usual departmentalized fashion, but
concludes that even assuming the best of conditions, some
cross-tracking is necessary. The core concept is an
organizational scheme where teachers of the major academic
areas share the same students and schedules as teaching
teams. Stiff (1986) pointed out that by using this concept,
students can receive quality education in the academic core
areas, but the same is not true in elective areas where
opportunities are restricted due to a limited number of
classes. The scheduling concerns presented by YRE for
specialized and elective course offerings have been addressed
most frequently by offering exploratory mini-courses or
special intersession courses which promote greater scheduling
flexibility. According to Larsen (1991), the use of
exploratory offerings is the technique employed by most
year-round middle schools. This requires scheduling students
into courses of short duration. The courses are grouped
together in order for students to have a variety of

curricular opportunities. The disadvantage of this technique is that because of the track placement of students, and the combination of exploratory courses assigned to the particular track groupings, elective opportunities for students are still somewhat restricted.

In a survey of districts involved in YRE, Mussatti (1981) found that problems regarding curriculum and instruction ranked first in high school programs implementing YRE. Districts reported that sequencing and course continuity created serious curricular problems by forcing the combination or elimination of lower enrollment, specialized programs in a multi-track schedule. Among the concerns expressed in Mussatti's 1981 study were (a) problems of specialized tracking resulted from "singleton" courses being offered on one track, (b) the development of specialized mini-courses to fit year-round programs, and (c) a curriculum limited to basic courses. Respondents to Mussatti's (1981) study also indicated that it was difficult for teachers to develop relationships with students or to properly supervise and monitor make-up work.

Many of the concerns reported by Musatti (1981) were still being reported more than five years later (Crane School District, 1991; Howell, 1988; Quinlan et al., 1987; and Stiff, 1986). Scheduling inflexibility affected curricular programs because of an unequal balance between tracks. The reduced curriculum offerings have been addressed through

various scheduling and organizational schemes that allow for both specialization and variety of courses.

Small schools have struggled with the problems of teacher specialization and maintaining a rich and varied curriculum (Larsen, 1991). The school-within-a-school approach indigenous to YRE tracks creates problems in scheduling which in turn affects the delivery of curricular programs by effectively reducing larger schools to smaller school units (Larsen, 1991). As a result schools are forced to deal with scheduling concerns that are inherent to a smaller organizational scheme.

Student activities and athletics have also encountered problems with YRE implementation. The Utah Foundation (1990) reported that implementation of year-round programs at the secondary level was impeded by the multitude of curricular organization and extracurricular activities, such as athletic teams and performing groups. Musatti (1981) reported that athletics suffered less than activities under a year-round plan, but cited other difficulties such as the (1) maintenance of performing arts programs, (2) coordination of student activities, (3) decline in school spirit, and (4) need for "off-cycle" students to provide their own transportation.

The Crane School District (Yuma, Arizona) found while adjustments were in the realm of extra curricular activities, student participation was enriched. For instance, some athletes opted for a track in session so that they could

participate in a seasonal program, while others took a vacation during that season so that they could concentrate on conditioning (Crane School District, 1991).

Band and music program directors reported similar experiences in the Crane School District. Small groups and individual rehearsals and practices benefited from rotating schedules. Off-track students often practiced with the band, chorus, or orchestra for as many days as they wished. Student Government had the option of retaining a traditional format by increasing communication with those off-track, or organizing councils for each track and providing several groups of students an opportunity for leadership instead of one. Similar programs could be implemented for dances, art fairs, clubs, etc. (Crane School District, 1991).

Overall, a review of literature yielded very little information on implementation of middle school programs on YRE. Studies were limited primarily to planning proposals, attitudinal surveys, and needs assessments. For example, the Chiron Middle School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, presented a plan that focused on program staffing, sites, time-line, governance, impact, accountability, and transportation (Jennings, 1989). Although the proposal was comprehensive, it provided little insight into the implementation of program or organizational practices. The Crane School District (1991) in Yuma, Arizona, and the Utah Foundation (1990) offered evaluative reports and needs assessment about the design and implementation of YRE programs. The Crane School District

(1991) and the Utah Foundation (1990) also highlighted the educational advantages and disadvantages of YRE.

Various attitudinal surveys about YRE have been conducted with parents, students and teachers (Baker, 1990; Christie, 1989; Banta, 1975; Probinsky, 1974; and Young and Berger, 1983). In these studies, participants reported a moderate affirmation of the desirability of year-round programs. The findings of these studies ranged from teacher preferences for the year-round approach (Christie, 1989) to voter opinions towards YRE (Banta, 1975). Very few of the studies helped to isolate the effects of the middle school program design as it related to YRE. Two exceptions were Larsen (1991), who examined scheduling difficulties in a year-round school serving grades 8 and 9, and Whitley (1974), who presented a model of a successful student scheduling pattern for a 45-15 year-round middle school. Whitley (1974) formulated a house design and team teaching structure facilitated by a revolving pattern resource schedule. This model allowed for 100 percent of resource lab teaching time for the entire student population in attendance at one time. Essentially, the model required that an entire school year be charted in advance to discover patterns and methods of rotation that would allow maximum implementation of the middle school concept and instructional system. Larsen's (1991) and Whitley's (1974) reports suggested that middle school program implementation involves complexities in organization and design similar to those reported in high

schools by Mussatti (1981), the Crane School District (1991), and the Utah Foundation (1990).

<u>Development of the Middle School Concept</u>

The purpose of this section is to: (1) provide an overview of the historical background of the middle school movement in the U.S., (2) describe the middle school movement in Florida, and (3) discuss the characteristics and components of middle school implementation.

<u>Historical Background of the Middle School Movement in the U.S.</u>

Before the turn of the century, the predominant school organization in the U.S. consisted of the elementary school, grades 1-8 and the high school, grades 9-12. In 1888, Charles Eliot, then president of Harvard University, initiated a national movement seeking to lower the age for college entrance. The National Education Association endorsed the movement and helped initiate a new organization of grades 1-6 in the elementary school with grades 7-12 in the high school.

By 1917, experiments were underway with various divisions of the 7-12 plan, resulting in the establishment of over 270 separate schools housing students in grade 7-9. These schools were appropriately called junior high schools. Though it was not until the 1920s that this new organization called the junior high school assumed pedagogical as well as logistical purposes, it was this early transformation of the secondary grades that created the impetus for further change

(Doda, 1984). The junior high school movement spread rapidly after 1920. Following World War I, school enrollments increased dramatically and school facilities became overcrowded. One answer to crowded elementary and high schools was to move grades 7-9 into another building (often into the old high school) and just build one new building.

The junior high school program, however, lacked clear definition regarding its organizational and curricular purposes. Although early writers (Bunker, 1909; Fullerton, 1910) alluded to the special needs of learners in grades 7-9, the curriculum and organization of the early junior high school did not differ substantially from the senior high program. As the number of junior high schools increased, attitudes and assumptions about the purposes and effectiveness of this school plan began to change. Early adolescent learners, housed in separate schools, began to stir the interests of educators who were concerned that these junior high schools were not suitable for the students they served. As knowledge on early adolescent development became available to educators, they began to note that the junior high school program was developmentally inappropriate (Cooper & Peterson, 1949; Segal, 1951; Shipp, 1951). A growing dissatisfaction with the junior high school program continued to emerge as new knowledge of early adolescent development accumulated.

Though the junior high school program was reputed to be unsuitable to the needs and interests of early adolescents, no specific major alternative organization was proposed until the early 1960s. A renewed interest in college preparation led to a call for a four year high school with specialized courses. Coupled with this criticism were increased enrollments of school-aged children, soaring tax rates, and racial desegregation. Based on a need to provide a more relevant and appropriate educational environment to aid in the transition from the elementary to the high school, an alternative program called the middle school emerged (Bondi & Wiles, 1986).

Initially, the knowledge that the onset of puberty occurred at an age more closely associated with grades five or six, rather than seven, led to a limited conceptualization of the middle school as a grade reorganization and resulted in schools with grades 6-8 rather than 7-9 (Eichorn, 1973). The concept was quickly expanded, however, as efforts were made to align middle school curriculum and instruction to a broader knowledge of early adolescent physical, intellectual, social, and emotional developmental features (Toepfer, 1982). This alignment has become more expansive with the recognition that maturation has been occurring earlier in successive generations due to factors such as nutrition and quality of medical care, known as the "secular trend" (Lambert Rothschild, Atland & Green, 1972; Coleman, 1980). The transitional period of adolescent development involves

physical changes that reveal a developmental lag between girls and boys. On the average, girls reach maturity two years earlier than males. However, adolescent females tend to report significantly lower self-esteem and self-image than males (Simmons & Blyth, 1987).

In the early 1960s, the middle school concept was developed further as organizational characteristics were defined. Alexander (1964) presented the characteristics of and need for a new school in the middle that represented: 1) a well-articulated 12 to 14 year age system of education; 2) preparation for, and transition to, adolescence; 3) continued general education; and 4) abundant opportunities of individualization, a flexible curriculum, and emphasis on values. Alexander (1964) further suggested that as near a middle unit as possible might be best since the population in grades 6-8 was growing rapidly.

In the following 30 years, there was a rapid growth in the number of middle schools with grade configurations of 6-8, 5-8, and 7-8. During the 1965-66 school year, Cuff (1967) reported that there were 499 middle schools in the U.S. By 1987-88, the total number of schools that had at least three grades and not more than five including grades 6 and 7 had risen to 5466 (Alexander & McEwin, 1989). In addition to these, there were 2627 schools with grades 7-8, 2191 schools of grades 7-9, and 573 "others" of grade 5 or higher. By the 1987-88 school year, a total of 10,857 middle level schools were in existence. George and Alexander,

(1993) have claimed that a marked trend towards grades 6-8 schools is evident and that the number of schools in the middle will continue to grow in the 1990s.

The rationale for implementing the middle school program initially may have emanated from reasons other than a need to focus on the adolescent learner. For example, in the South, many middle schools opened in the late 1960s and 1970s as products of racial desegregation strategies by school districts. Changing demographic patterns in the Northeast and Midwest necessitated grade level re-organization to utilize existing facilities more fully to accommodate growth in early grades of the elementary school and decreases in enrollment in the upper grades (George & Alexander, 1993). Results of studies in 1968 and 1988 by Alexander and McEwin offered several reasons for the creation of middle schools. In 1968, the most frequent reason was to eliminate overcrowding. To provide a program specifically designed for children in the 10 to 14 age group was the number one reason for beginning a middle school in 1988, but number two in 1968. In 1988, the number two reason for establishment of middle schools was to provide a bridge for students between the elementary and high schools. Results from recent surveys have suggested that there is a trend toward attempting to meet student needs through the middle school organization (Alexander & McEwin, 1989).

The first wave of middle schools in the 1960s and 1970s was succeeded by another wave following the "Nation at Risk"

report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education
(1983). This report signified a need for a more rigorous
high school academic program and increased graduation
requirements which extended more intensely into the ninth
grade. The presence of the ninth grade in the junior high
school organization was difficult to defend and increased the
momentum for reorganizing into a middle school configuration
(George & Alexander, 1993). At this point, the momentum for
districts to reorganize into a middle grades configuration
took on increasing speed. Aiding in this impetus, the middle
school concept was proving to be a program that appeared to
produce outcomes that were more appropriate for middle school
age students. The outcomes of successful middle grade
programs resulted in improved student attitudes and behavior,
more positive home-school relations, improved or stable
academic achievement, and more positive inter-ethnic
interaction (George & Alexander, 1993). Consequently, the
middle grade program became a more popular alternative which
educators sought to implement for its own sake.

Despite the growing number of middle schools across the
1970s and 1980s, a concern developed that many middle level
programs were failing to provide education suited to the age
group. Indeed, many middle schools sought to maintain the
status quo of their former elementary or junior high
organizations due to the lack of essential personnel,
facilities, and funds (George & Alexander, 1993). States
such as California, Florida, and Indiana organized task

forces to address reform in all areas of middle grade organization. Curriculum revision, implementation of interdisciplinary teams, advisory programs, common planning times for teachers, at-risk efforts, and articulation with elementary and high schools were included as proposed reforms (George & Alexander, 1993; Speaker's Task Force, 1984; Superintendent's Middle Grade Task Force, 1987).

Middle School Movement in Florida

A Task Force on Middle Childhood Education was charged to look at middle childhood education in Florida, on October 24, 1983. The Task Force found that between the entry into the 4th grade and exit from the 8th grade, students must accomplish a number of developmental tasks, and that middle childhood programs must recognize the developmental diversity and needs of students in this age group. The Task Force (1984) claimed that careful attention should be given to program structure, organization, curriculum, student services, and personnel.

On March 23, 1984, the Task Force approved the final bill which contained curricular recommendations for grades 6-8, beginning with the 1985-86 school year. Recommendations of the Task Force called for three years of mathematics and communication for middle level students. Experiences in the communication curriculum were specified to include reading, writing, and speaking. Two years in science with instruction in life sciences and earth science were recommended, as well as a minimum of two years of social studies instruction to

include the study of United States/World Geography and
Florida history. One year of additional study in the area of
social studies or science was also recommended by the Task
Force.

The final bill contained recommendations addressing the
accomplishment of developmental tasks for adolescent
students. These recommendations comprised program components
that included: (1) teaching computer resources, critical
thinking skills and other related skills in the context of
required subjects; (2) providing regularly scheduled physical
education; (3) offering exploratory experiences selected but
not limited to the areas of art, music, health and physical
education, home economics, industrial arts, foreign
languages, business education, and pre-vocational education;
and (4) providing mini-courses which included high interest
learning experiences outside of the basic skills and
exploratory areas held during the day on an alternate
schedule.

In addition to these recommendations, the Task Force
proposed a "Florida Grades 6-8 Enhancement Program" to
implement strategies that included (1) organizing students
into interdisciplinary teams for instruction, (2) assigning
teachers in each team to rooms in close proximity to limit
unnecessary student movement, (3) organizing teacher time to
ensure common planning time, and (4) organizing students'
schedules to permit flexible use of time blocks.

The Student Support Services Committee recommended the use of the advisor/advisee concept to permit the development of a continuous systematic program focused on students' affective development and decision-making skills. A daily period of time was recommended for the development of these skills and students were assigned to a specific staff member for this purpose. Students' schedules were arranged to permit some interaction with students from other teams during the elective classes. The instructional program recommendations included provisions for a system to introduce the formal academic disciplines to students, and required exploration of the basic elements of these disciplines in preparation for the high school program. An alternative program was also recommended to meet the needs of students who were overage, failing, or exhibiting characteristics which made the probability of success in high school unlikely. The purpose of this program was to assist the student in either remediating the identified weakness or finding an appropriate placement in alternative high school programs.

The rationale for the Task Force's recommendation recognized that middle grade children exhibited special needs and abilities of extreme variability. The degree of this variability made the middle school "the most critical unit in the educational design for continuous educational progress" (Speaker's Task Force, p.1). The Task Force's recommendations came on the heels of a ten-year focus on

major exemplary educational programs in Florida on the early school years and high school students and teachers. Middle childhood education had received the least attention of the educational innovators.

As a result of these recommendations, legislators enacted a program of special financial aid for Florida's grades 4-8, particularly grades 6-8. In a study of middle level schools in Florida, Irvin (1990) indicated that the legislation has had a measurably positive effect on the state's middle school programs. The Progress in Middle Education Program (PRIME) legislation of 1986 provided flexibility for middle schools to operate programs unique for their student clientele (230.2319, F. S.). The implementation of the middle school concept in Florida has burgeoned as a result of legislation. Advisory programs, interdisciplinary teams, common planning times, and careful articulation between the elementary and high school programs are characteristic of middle level schools in Florida.

Characteristics and Components of Middle School Implementation

By the 1970s, the middle school program was developing an identity with common characteristics regarding its structure. The literature on the middle school movement is replete with reports about the desirable organizational components of middle schools. Alexander (1968), Brooks and Edwards (1978), the Educational Research Service (1983), the National Middle School Association (NMSA, 1982), and the

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD, 1975) have published information pertaining to program characteristics of the middle school. Although there were differences between the authors, most stressed matters of curriculum, instructional organization, teacher guidance, instructional methodology, and middle school orientation and articulation (George & Alexander, 1993).

From a study of 160 potentially exemplary middle schools George and Oldaker (1985) found that "effective schools manifest markedly similar programs regardless of their locations or other distinguishing features" (p. 19). These authors identified common features of these schools that included interdisciplinary team organization, a flexibly scheduled day, homebase/advisor-advisee teacher guidance program, curriculum provisions for student personal development and a favorable learning climate.

Interdisciplinary team organization has been cited in recent studies by Alexander and McEwin (1989) and Epstein and MacIver (1990) as a key practice in the middle grades. Interdisciplinary teams are typically composed of teachers who teach different subjects and share the same group of students, the same schedule, and the same area of the building. These teams of teachers are responsible for planning, teaching, and evaluating curriculum and instruction in more than one academic area. A typical team consists of one math, one language arts, one social studies, and one science teacher, with teams often including a reading teacher

or an exploratory subject teacher (Irvin, 1990). This
interdisciplinary organization also includes common planning
time for teams which permits teachers to develop and share
information about students and coordinate their instructional
program across subjects.

Another "signature" practice of effective middle schools
is flexible scheduling, (Epstein & MacIver, 1990). This
type of scheduling permits class periods to differ from one
day to the next in order to accommodate students' needs and
varying instructional activities. Block or modular
scheduling formats are examples of schedules that help to
organize the instructional days. Block scheduling utilizes
extended time blocks (e.g., academics) so that the core
subjects may have variable time allocations on a day-to-day
basis. Modular scheduling employs short duration modules
that are used as the basic unit of time. Modules are then
arranged to accommodate the various instructional
activities.

Exploratory and mini-courses are also characteristic of
good middle schools. Sometimes called unified arts,
exploratory courses are designed to allow students to sample
a wide variety of subjects. These courses are offered for a
semester or on a rotation of six to nine weeks, and may
include art, music, physical education, health, foreign
language, vocational education, and/or computer literacy.
Mini-courses include short term study of high-interest and/or

novelty courses such as photography, creative writing, or oceanography (Irvin, 1990).

Teacher-based guidance/homeroom programs, sometimes called advisory programs are a method of ensuring that all students know and are known by at least one adult in the building. As an organizational component of the middle school program, teachers spend regularly scheduled time (at least once a week) talking to students about personal and/or societal issues that concern them such as substance abuse, relationships, self-esteem, or ways of adapting to change (Alexander & McEwin, 1989). Assigning students to the same advisory teacher for all years spent in the middle grades has been identified by Epstein and MacIver (1990) as one key practice regarding advisory programs in the middle grades.

Classroom instruction in exemplary middle schools is characterized by George and Alexander (1993) as active and varied for teachers and students. How these instructional approaches are related to other middle school practices is not known, but the differences in instructional approaches within any type of grade organization are greater than differences between types of schools. Cooperative learning has been cited as a key practice in the middle grades by Epstein and MacIver (1990).

Continued orientation and articulation for students, parents, and teachers is an "earmark" of good middle schools as well (Alexander & McEwin, 1989). Articulation plans which aid in the transition to the middle school and to high school

informs families and students about school programs. This helps to prepare students for the curricular as well as the social demands of their new school, and helps them adjust to that school. In their study of national middle school practices and trends, Epstein and MacIver (1990) found that the three most common activities used at points of transition for middle school students were (1) visits by elementary school students to middle schools or visits by middle school students to visit high schools for an information session or assembly, (2) meetings between middle school and elementary administrators or middle and high school administrators to discuss articulation and programs, and (3) meetings between middle school counselors and elementary or high school counselors and staff. Other key practices pertaining to articulation and transition in the middle grades identified by Epstein and MacIver (1990) were parental involvement in workshops on early adolescence and the use of parents as volunteers.

Within the context of the interdisciplinary team organization, different grouping arrangements may be implemented for instructional purposes in a manner to accommodate the developmental characteristics of the students being served. George and Alexander (1993) have described grouping strategies employed by middle schools. These methods reflect varying levels of "supportive interpersonal structure" and "teacher-subject specialization" that represent middle school program implementation.

In gradewide interdisciplinary teams teachers serve students from an entire grade level. The focus of teacher planning is on teacher-subject specialization and most of the teachers will not share the same students. The teachers and students are organized by grade levels in different parts of the school and special activities are designed by the teachers when they have students in common. Though gradewide interdisciplinary teams do not totally exclude supportive interpersonal structure, the primary emphasis is on teacher-subject specialization.

Core-style grouping is utilized to extend daily relationships for students with one teacher primarily. For most of the school day, students are largely in a self-contained setting much like an elementary classroom. Learning activities are balanced from a small number of other teachers who work together in interdisciplinary teams. The core-style grouping strategy places a heavy emphasis on offering a supportive interpersonal structure and providing a format that allows adolescents with special needs to develop strong teacher-student relationships.

The most popular grouping strategy at the middle level is the grade-level interdisciplinary team (Alexander & McEwin 1989). Teachers are organized according to the students they have in common; one teacher teaches one subject to one grade level. By working closely with others who teach the same students in different subject areas, the teachers are permitted to reach middle school goals more effectively

through a more consistent and carefully planned instructional program.

Multi-year or long-term teams allow teachers to remain with the same group of students for three years in grades 6-8. The focus on developing long-term relationships promotes continuity in learning and caring among group mates for the three year period. The interdisciplinary approach is utilized so that students almost always begin and end their middle school careers on the same team. Examples of multi-year or long-term teams include multi-age group teams that reflect the composition of the total school population, and student-teacher progression where the teams are organized by grade level.

The school-within-a-school approach to student grouping retains the basic format of the conventional grade-level teams, but divides the school into "houses" or sub-schools which are representative of the larger school. Students spend three years in grades 6-8 in one "house", but not with just one set of teachers. The students' movement around the school is drastically reduced, meaning that students spend almost all of their three years in one wing of the building. Also, a version of the interdisciplinary team process, the school-within-a-school strategy can include a range of options from self-contained classrooms to grade-level teams.

Departmentalized teams stress a high degree of teacher-subject specialization with very little emphasis on supportive interpersonal structure. This format is like the

typical junior high structure where students move from one classroom to another, along with their teachers for each subject. Within this approach, teachers in the same subject specialization can plan and teach together and create small and large group activities by combining classes and regrouping students for instructional activities. This strategy, however, lacks the interdisciplinary team structure and process that characterizes the middle grades concept (Epstein & MacIver, 1990).

Organizing and grouping students for instruction at the middle schools provides a way to accommodate the special developmental characteristics of the students served. The techniques and schemes described above illustrate models which integrate the factors of student development and middle school organization in order to balance "supportive interpersonal structure" and "teacher-subject specialization" appropriate for a particular population of early adolescent students. Although the general concepts and practices of middle school education regarding interdisciplinary teaming and grouping are generally accepted, there are many variations that make it possible for the educators at each school site to establish the organizational framework in which to structure the instructional program for the particular student population of a school (George & Alexander, 1993).

Research on middle school programs reveals practices related to a variety of contextual features such as the

organization of teachers and students, the instructional
program, the personal development of students, and
articulation aid in changing schools (Alexander & McEwin,
1989; Epstein & MacIver, 1990; George & Oldaker, 1985). The
middle school framework essentially provides flexibility in
scheduling programmatic components so that teachers may
adjust their activities to accommodate the varying needs and
interests of middle school children. Although studies have
shown that most schools containing grade 7 have not yet
developed educational programs based on recommended practices
for the middle schools, overall, middle schools and 7-8
schools use more of the practices that are recommended for
responsive middle school education than other grade level
organizations (Epstein & MacIver, 1990). The need for
appropriate middle school education is recognized as a
critical factor in responding to the risks facing children
today and control in helping students succeed and stay in
school (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989;
Jackson & Hornbeck, 1989). The challenge of defining and
creating structures of teaching and learning for young
adolescents requires the implementation of practices that are
congruent with the needs of these children.

Chapter Summary

Both YRE and the middle school approach represent
efforts to provide a different kind of school organization
through modification of structural components and
instructional organization. The catalyst for the middle

school program initially emerged from a need to create a more appropriate school program for adolescent learners. While the history of YRE indicates that year-round programs have been implemented for a variety of reasons, the recent renewal of interest has been largely due to an increase in student enrollment during the 1980s. However, this renewed interest has been accelerated by public demands for improved in educational programs. In a similar connection, there has been a call for improvements specifically in middle schools.

Previous studies regarding the compatibility of junior high and high school programs on YRE have revealed concerns about the scheduling practices and the curriculum that affect program designs and practices. The same schedule that reportedly allows greater for flexibility and variety of learning opportunities necessitates creative organizational strategies for curriculum and/or program implementation in junior and senior high schools (Mussatti, 1981; Larsen, 1990). Scheduling difficulties often restrict the availability of courses for students and require creative solutions to ensure continuity and sequencing. These concerns appear to be most critical for advanced or specialized courses/programs and elective course offerings in a multi-track setting. While the year-round blocks lend themselves well to the curriculum structure, Howell (1988) has observed that the development of YRE programs may necessitate curriculum revisions that take several years as well as increased expenditures. The continuous learning

opportunities afforded students on YRE have been attributed to the shortened learning and vacation periods interspersed through the year, allowing greater student retention. The increased flexibility promoted by YRE advocates has been associated with practices pertaining to intersession activities.

The organizational design of the middle school approach offers programs and experiences are patently unique from elementary and high school programs. Operationally, the middle school approach has shifted from rigid requirements and scheduling to organizational flexibility within an environment that is sensitive to changing needs. In the past three decades, a significant body of research has been generated to define and identify the components of effective middle school practices (George & Alexander, 1993). However, the effects of YRE on middle school are relatively unknown. Attempts to evaluate year-round education in the middle schools have been limited at any grade level configuration (Young & Berger, 1983; National Education Association, 1987). This research study represents an effort to extend the knowledge base about the relationship between middle school program practices and year-round middle schools.

CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to identify the various
program-related, and organizational practices used in U.S.
public middle schools that had implemented YRE. The
exploratory and descriptive nature of this research required
an examination of middle school and YRE program components in
order to characterize program implementation. Program
components of middle school and YRE approaches were
identified on the basis of recurring and common themes in
relevant literature and research studies.

This chapter provides a description of the design of the
study and includes a discussion about (a) the study
population and sample, (b) the development of the survey
instrument, (c) data collection procedures and, (d) data
analysis.

Study Population and Sample

In order to make trustworthy statements about a target
population, the sample must be well defined to facilitate the
drawing of conclusions (Walker & Burnhill, 1988). The target
population for this study consisted of U.S. public middle
schools. The sample was derived from the population of middle
schools that included grade 7, that were listed as members of
the 1993-94 National Association of Year-Round Education (see

Appendix A). Each district was contacted to identify middle schools that had YRE programs (see Appendices B & C).

A cross-sectional survey in which standardized information was collected from a sample of the specified population was used in this study. The cross-sectional type of survey requires that measurements are obtained at or about a particular time, when the purpose is to describe situations or estimate frequencies rather than to establish causal patterns (Walker & Burnhill, 1988).

Middle schools who are not members of NAYRE may differ systematically from those included in this purposive sample, and generalizations made from the study should not extend beyond the sample population. The survey respondents were the principals of each school; each school served as the unit of analysis.

Development of the Survey Instrument

The instrument included items related to program components of middle school and YRE organizational approaches that were identified in a review of the related literature. The list of survey items evolved from literature searches on major themes related to program components and program implementation of middle schools and YRE organizational approaches. The statements in the survey instrument were primarily derived from The Exemplary Middle School (George & Alexander, 1993), and Epstein and MacIver's 1990 national study of middle school practices.

Survey items pertaining to YRE program practices were also derived from studies that reported effects of YRE program implementation on the curriculum and instructional design at the high school level (Crane School District, 1991; Howell, 1988; Mussatti, 1981; Quinlan et al., 1987; Stiff, 1986), and Larsen's (1991) review of scheduling options available to multi-track secondary schools. Overall, the survey statements regarding YRE program components were designed to address the implementation of organizational and scheduling schemes as they related to curricular offerings and instructional opportunities for students.

Middle school and YRE program characteristics identified in the literature review were compiled. Subsequently, a preliminary instrument was submitted to nine experts who represented the fields of middle level and year-round education (see Appendix D). Pre-testing of the items provided the opportunity to further detect and remove ambiguities, to ascertain the range of possible responses, and to ensure that items were yielding the information desired (Walker & Burnhill, 1988). The experts were asked to review the instrument and assess each item regarding its accuracy in representing the characteristics of middle school and/or YRE program implementation (see Appendices E & F).

The experts assessed questionnaire items and format for accuracy and clarity. The judges' suggestions and recommendations were incorporated into a second draft. Subsequently, the revised survey was pilot-tested by seven

Florida year-round middle school principals during the 1993-94 school year. The principals were asked to respond to the survey items as they pertained to their school and to provide their reactions to those items or the format that they felt were ambiguous (See Appendices G & H). The principals were also asked to include any topics or characteristics considered relevant to the accurate representation of middle school/YRE program implementation that were not represented in the survey. The results of the pilot test of the instrument were used to further refine the survey.

Data Collection Procedures

The five-part questionnaire was mailed to the principals at the 127 year-round middle schools identified in the NAYRE directory. A second request was mailed to those principals who had not replied within two weeks of the first mailing. A third request was mailed two weeks after the second request to those who had not responded to the first or second mailing. The survey instrument was accompanied by a cover letter that explained the purpose of the questionnaire and invited the principal's participation (see Appendices I & J).

The first part of the survey instrument requested data about characteristics pertinent to program implementation. These questions were designed to obtain data about the schools' grade levels, number of students, number of years that middle grade program had been implemented, the number of years a year-round calendar had been operational, the pattern

of attendance grouping used, and the type of calendar cycle
being implemented.

Part II of the questionnaire consisted of statements
characterizing organizational and/or program practices of
middle schools and their implementation. Those items were
categorized into five areas: (1) curriculum,
(2) instructional organization, (3) teacher guidance,
(4) instructional methodology, and (5) middle school
orientation and articulation. Each of the five areas was
represented by three to five items. Each statement was
assigned a four-point rating scale. The respondents were
instructed to determine the extent which a program practice
was in use and to use the following scale: (1)= absent,
(2)= present but in need of revision, (3)= present and
considered effective, or (4)= present and considered
exemplary.

Part III of the instrument consisted of scheduling and
grouping schemes that are typically used in middle school and
YRE program articulation. Respondents were instructed to
indicate if a particular scheduling or grouping scheme was
applicable to their school, and by circling the appropriate
grade level (6, 7, or 8). The numerical designation was used
solely for descriptive purposes. Space was also provided for
the respondents to describe any schemes that were not
included in the descriptive statements.

Part IV of the instrument consisted of statements that
characterized program implementation in multi-track year-

round junior and senior high schools. Respondents were asked
to rate each statement according to their middle school
program implementation based on their experiences, using the
following rating scale: (1)= strongly disagree,
(2)= disagree, (3)= undecided, (4)= agree, (5)= strongly
agree. Only schools on a multi-track schedule were asked to
respond to items listed in Part IV of the survey. Schools on
a single-track schedule were instructed to proceed to Part V.

Part V of the questionnaire consisted of two open-ended
questions. In the open-ended items, participants were asked
to describe any benefits or disadvantages specifically
related to implementing the middle school program on a year-
round calendar. Respondents were also asked to send any
printed materials pertaining to program organization or
design that would assist the researcher in understanding more
about their schools.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from each returned questionnaire were
processed using the Statistical Package for the Social
Sciences (SPSS), and analyzed using descriptive methods.
Responses from Parts II, III, and IV were tabulated and
analyzed in accordance with their distribution relative to
attendance grouping systems reported in Part I of the survey
instrument and program characteristics reported by
principals. Descriptive statistics were used to count actual
responses, and determine percentages. The data were used to

explore relationships, negative cases, and highlight consistency in the findings.

The two open-ended questions were designed to probe principals about the implementation of middle school programs on year-round schedules. Patterns and regularities that emerged from the open-response data were used to develop categories, typologies, or themes that were recurring.

<u>Summary</u>

In this research study, survey methods were used to develop an understanding of the various program-related, and organization practices used by U.S. public middle schools that had implemented YRE approaches. A purposive sample of 127 middle schools was derived from the NAYRE Directory (1993). The results reported by school principals were tabulated to determine the relationships between middle school program practices and year-round schedules. Descriptive statistics were utilized in order to reflect the distribution of the practices relative to program implementation.

In this chapter, the results of the survey are presented. The findings of this study are organized by the following subtopics: (1) survey responses, (2) school characteristics, (3) middle school practices, (4) middle school/YRE scheduling and grouping schemes and (5) middle school/YRE program design and implementation.

Survey Responses

Seventy-one or 56% of the principals responded to the questionnaire. Two of the questionnaires were non-deliverable due to nonforwardable mailing addresses. Five of the responses were omitted for one of the following reasons:

    (1)   participant expressed a wish not to participate in the study,

    (2)   survey was returned without necessary information

Sixty-six or 52% of the returned questionnaires were analyzed.

School Characteristics

Middle school principals responding to the survey described their schools based on the statements listed in Part I of the questionnaire. The data collected were used to describe organizational characteristics of the schools including (1) grade span of the school, (2) number of

students enrolled, (3) number of years that the middle school
program practices had been implemented, (4) number of years
that the school had used a year-round calendar, (5) the
attendance grouping system used, (6) number of tracks used on
a multi-track calendar, and (7) the type of calendar cycle or
attendance period being implemented.

Grade Span of Year-Round Middle Schools

Table 1 presents the frequency of returns by grade span
categories as reported by the school principals. In this
study, 51.5% of the year-round middle schools indicated the
use of a 6-8 grade span, while 25.8% reported a 7-8 grade
span and 6.1% used a 7-9 grade level configuration.
Additionally, 6.1% of the schools reported using a grade span
of 6-7, 4.5% used a 5-8 grade organization, 3% used K-8 grade
levels, and 1.5% used a K-12 or 7 only grade organization in
their schools

Table 1
Grade Span of Year-Round Middle Schools (N=66)

	Grade Span						
	K-8	K-12	5-8	6-7	7	6-8	7-8	7-9
Number	2	1	3	4	1	34	17	4
Percentage	3.0	1.5	4.5	6.1	1.5	51.5	25.8	6.1

Student Enrollment of School Administered by Respondents

Year-round middle schools ranged in size from 230 to
3350 students. As reported in Table 2, 36.3% of the schools
enrolled 801-1200 students while 25.8% reported an enrollment

of 1201-2000 students. Of the schools represented in the study, 19.7% reported student enrollments from 501 to 800, 10.6% were comprised of 2001 to 3500 students, and 7.6% reported enrollments in the range of 1-500.

Table 2
Student Enrollment of School Administered by Respondents (N=66)

	Student Enrollment				
	1-500	501-800	801-1200	1201-200	2001-3500
Number	5	13	24	17	7
Percentage	7.6	19.7	36.3	25.8	10.6

Number of Years Actively Seeking to Implement Middle School Program

As indicated in Table 3, 47% of the schools reported that they were actively seeking to implement a middle school program from 0 to 3 years or between 4 and 10 years. Schools that had implemented a middle school program for more than 10 years were represented by 6% of the principals.

Table 3
Number of Years Actively Seeking to Implement Middle School Program   (N=66)

	Years Implementing Middle School Program		
	1-3	4-10	More than 10
Number	31	31	4
Percentage	47.0	47.0	6.0

Number of Years Functioning on a Year-Round Calendar

Table 4 presents the principals' use of a year-round calendar. The principals indicated that 63.6% of the schools had used a year-round calendar from 1 to 3 years.

Additionally, 28.8% of the principals reported using a year-round calendar from 4 to 10 years and 7.6% indicated they had been using a year-round calendar for more than 10 years.

Table 4
Number of Years Functioning on a Year-Round Calendar   (N=66)

	Years Functioning on a "Year-Round Calendar"		
	1-3	4-10	More than 10
Number	42	19	5
Percentage	63.6	28.8	7.6

Attendance Grouping System Used to Assign Students

As shown in Table 5, 37.9% of the principals, or N=25, reported the use of a single-track attendance grouping system. The use of a multi-track attendance grouping system was reported by 62.1%, or N=41, of the principals.

Table 5
Attendance Grouping System Used to Assign Students   (N=66)

	Attendance Grouping System	
	Single-Track	Multi-Track
Number	25	41
Percentage	37.9	62.1

Number of Tracks Used by Schools on a Multi-Track Calendar

Table 6 indicates that 65.9%, or N=27, of the respondents reported the use of 4 tracks within multi-track schools. Ten of the multi-track school principals, or 24.4%, indicated the use of 3 tracks, while 7.3%, or N=3, reported

using 5 tracks. One school (2.4%) used 2 tracks to implement
their program.

Table 6
Number of Tracks Used by Schools on a Multi-Track Calendar
(N=41)

	Number of Tracks Used			
	2	3	4	5
Number	1	10	27	3
Percentage	2.4	24.4	65.9	7.3

Calendar Cycles/Attendance Periods Implemented

A variety of calendar cycles or attendance periods were
reported in use by middle school principals. Table 7
presents data pertaining to the use of calendar cycles in
year-round middle schools. Of the schools represented in the
study, 25.8%, or N=17, reported using a 45-15 attendance
period, 24.2%, or N=16, used a 60-20 calendar cycle format,
and 21.2%, or N=14, employed a Trimester Plan. Of the 14
principals reporting the use of a Trimester Plan, 10
indicated the use of a 60-20 calendar cycle format and one
reported using a 60-15 calendar cycle. The three remaining
Trimester Plan principals did not indicate which type of
calendar cycle they used in their schools.

The use of 60-15 and 90-30 attendance periods were
reported by 6.1%, or N=4, of the principals, while 9.1%, or
N=6, of the schools reported utilizing a Concept 6 attendance
period arrangement. Of the schools in the study, 3%, or N=2,
indicated a use of the Quarter Plan and one school, or 1.5%,
reported using a Flexible All-Year Plan. None of the

principals reported using the Quinmaster Plan; the Five-Track, Five-Term Plan; or the Orchard Plan. Principals at two schools, or 3%, reported the use of other calendar cycles (a Modified Concept 6 and the Custom Plan) that were not identified in the survey.

Table 7
Calendar Cycles/Attendance Periods Implemented

Calendar Cycle	Number	Per Cent
45 - 15	17	25.8
60 - 20	16	24.2
60 - 15	4	6.1
90 - 30	4	6.1
Concept 6	6	9.1
Trimester Plan	14	21.2
Quarter Plan	2	3.0
Quinmaster Plan	0	0.0
Five Track, Five Term Plan	0	0.0
Flexible All Year Plan	1	1.5
Orchard Plan	0	0.0
Other	2	3.0

Middle School Program Practices

This portion of the chapter contains a presentation of the data regarding the implementation of program practices characteristic of schools utilizing the middle school approach. The data pertaining to these practices were organized according to the domains of middle school program

practices, including: (a) curriculum, (b) instructional organization, (c) teacher guidance, (d) instructional methodology, and (e) middle school orientation and articulation.

Each middle school principal participating in the survey was asked to rate their school on the program descriptors of middle school program practices. Based on a four-point rating scale, the ratings were used to determine whether each practice was (1)= absent, (2)= present, but in need of revision, (3)= present and considered effective, or (4)= present and considered exemplary. As shown in Table 8, principals' ratings of the descriptors were reported according to the frequency distribution and mean rating for each statement pertaining to the implementation of program practices.

The results are presented for all middle schools and according to school's attendance cycles, single or multi-track, for each item within each domain. Mean ratings and percentages of exemplary and effective use are presented for each program practice. The frequency distribution relative to all practices and ratings categories, indicated that approximately 63% of the principals' responses were within a range from 0% to 29%. Based on this relative distribution, practices reported as absent or present, but in need of revision with frequencies of 30% or greater are also presented.

Table 8

Percentage of Responses to and Mean Ratings for the Domains of Middle School Practices by All Schools and by Attendance Cycles

Domains of Middle School Practices	item #	All Schools (N=66)					Single-Track (N=25)					Multi-Track (N=41)				
		1	2	3	4	X̄	1	2	3	4	X̄	1	2	3	4	X̄
Curriculum																
The curriculum is characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied.	17.	4.5	7.6	54.6	33.3	3.17	0.0	8.0	44.0	48.0	3.40	7.3	7.3	61.0	24.4	3.02
A broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences or personal growth and development is offered.	18.	10.6	16.7	43.9	28.8	2.91	8.0	16.0	48.0	28.0	2.96	12.2	17.0	41.5	29.3	2.88
Teams of teachers have at least some control over the schedule, the budget, and the curriculum.	20.	15.2	27.2	40.9	16.7	2.59	8.0	28.0	48.0	16.0	2.72	19.5	26.8	36.6	17.1	2.51
Instructional Organization																
An interdisciplinary team organization is scheduled in a common block of time in common areas.	8.	25.8	21.2	36.3	16.7	2.44	28.0	12.0	28.0	32.0	2.64	24.4	26.8	41.5	7.3	2.32
Team membership represents the basic academic subject areas as well as teachers from the exploratory or elective areas.	9.	16.7	30.3	34.8	18.2	2.55	20.0	36.0	28.0	16.0	2.40	14.6	24.4	41.5	19.5	2.66
A common daily period is provided for members to plan.	11.	42.4	7.6	21.2	28.8	2.36	36.0	8.0	16.0	40.0	2.60	46.3	7.3	24.4	22.0	2.23
Heterogeneous grouping strategies are employed within teams and across the middle school program.	12.	9.1	9.1	53.0	28.8	3.02	8.0	8.0	56.0	28.0	3.04	12.2	7.3	53.7	26.8	2.95
Students are regrouped with different classmates for three or more classes during the school day.	13.	33.3	9.1	40.9	16.7	2.41	20.0	8.0	52.0	20.0	2.72	41.4	9.8	34.2	14.6	2.23
Teacher Guidance																
There are organizational arrangements that encourage long-term, teacher-student relationships.	10.	47.0	24.2	24.2	4.6	1.86	48.0	28.0	20.0	4.0	1.80	43.9	22.0	29.3	4.8	1.95
A home base/homeroom/advisory groups meet regularly (one or more times/week).	15.	28.8	15.2	31.8	24.2	2.52	28.0	12.0	28.0	32.0	2.64	29.3	17.1	34.1	19.5	2.44
An activities program that provides for participation by all students is offered on a regularly scheduled basis.	16.	10.6	25.8	31.8	31.8	2.85	8.0	32.0	28.0	32.0	2.84	12.2	22.0	34.1	31.7	2.85
Students are assigned to the same home-base or advisory teacher for each year that they are enrolled in the middle school program.	21.	62.2	13.6	13.6	10.6	1.73	56.0	12.0	20.0	12.0	1.88	65.8	14.6	9.8	9.8	1.63

Table 8--continued

Domains of Middle School Practices	All Schools (N=66)					Single-Track (N=25)					Multi-Track (N=41)				
Item	1	2	3	4	X̄	1	2	3	4	X̄	1	2	3	4	X̄
Instructional Methodology															
14. Teachers vary the schedule within the academic block to accommodate instructional activities.	37.9	21.2	30.3	10.6	2.14	24.0	16.0	44.0	16.0	2.52	46.3	24.4	22.0	7.3	1.90
19. Teams of teachers carry out thematic and problem-centered units on a regular basis.	15.2	37.9	34.8	12.1	2.44	12.0	24.0	44.0	20.0	2.72	17.1	46.3	29.3	7.3	2.27
22. Classes are organized into cooperative learning groups; students earn rewards for mastery of learning skills.	16.7	36.4	40.9	6.0	2.36	16.0	32.0	44.0	8.0	2.44	17.1	39.0	39.0	4.9	2.32
Orientation and Articulation															
23. Parents are formally recruited and trained to work as school volunteers	36.4	37.9	22.7	3.0	1.92	20.0	56.0	24.0	0.0	2.04	48.8	26.8	19.5	4.9	1.80
24. Workshops are offered to parents on school programs and the nature of early adolescence.	24.3	39.4	24.2	12.1	2.24	28.0	40.0	24.0	8.0	2.12	22.0	36.6	26.8	14.6	2.34
25. Policies and practices that facilitate transition both from the elementary school and to the high school exist.	6.0	30.4	40.9	22.7	2.80	8.0	36.0	40.0	16.0	2.64	4.9	26.8	41.5	26.8	2.90

Note:

(1) = absent
(2) = present, but in need of revision
(3) = present and considered effective
(4) = present and considered exemplary

Ratings of Curriculum Practices

Statements pertaining to middle school curriculum practices were represented by Items 17, 18, and 20 in the survey instrument. As shown in Table 8, mean ratings for the three items were reported in the range of 2.59 and 3.17.

As shown in Table 8, 33% of the principals indicated that a curriculum characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied (Item 17) was used in an exemplary fashion. The mean rating for Item 17 was 3.17. Effective use of this practice was reported by 54.6% of the principals.

An exemplary use of the practice indicating that a broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences for personal growth and development is offered (Item 18) was reported by 28.8% of the principals. The mean rating for Item 18 was 2.91. More than 40% of the principals (43.9%) indicated an effective use of a broad range of exploratory opportunities.

Nearly 41% of the principals reported the effective use of teachers having at least some control over the schedule, the budget, and the curriculum (Item 20). As shown in Table 8, 16.7% of the principals considered the practice as exemplary. The mean rating for Item 20 was 2.59.

Single-track curriculum practices. An examination of Table 8 reveals that the mean ratings for the three curriculum practices that were reported by single-track principals ranged between 2.72 to 3.40.

Forty-eight percent of the single-track principals reported an exemplary use of Item 17, which states that the curriculum is characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied. Forty-four percent of the single-track principals reported an effective use of this practice. The mean rating for Item 17 was 3.40. Item 18, which states that a broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences for personal growth and development is offered, had a mean rating of 2.96 by single-track principals. This practice was reported by 28% of the single-track principals as exemplary and by 48% as being effectively used.

Teams of teachers having at least some control over the schedule, the budget, and the curriculum (Item 20) was reported as exemplary in use by 16% of the single-track principals and effective in use by 48% of the principals. The mean rating for Item 20 was 2.27.

Multi-track curriculum practices. As shown in Table 8, the mean ratings for the three multi-track curriculum practices ranged from 2.51 to 3.02.

The exemplary use of a curriculum characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied (Item 17) was reported by 24.4% of the multi-track principals. The mean rating for Item 17 was 3.02. A broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences for personal growth and development (Item 18) was reported as

exemplary by 29.3% of the principals and effective by 41.5%.
The mean rating for Item 18 was 2.88.

Item 20, which states that teams of teachers have at
least some control over the schedule, the budget, and the
curriculum was considered to be exemplary by 17.1% of the
multi-track principals. Effective use of this practice was
reported by 36.6% of the principals. The mean rating for
Item 20 was 2.51.

Ratings of Instructional Organization Practices

Instructional organization practices were represented by
statements 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13 in the survey instrument. As
presented in Table 8, mean ratings for the five instructional
organization practices ranged from 2.36 to 3.02.

As shown in Table 8, 16.7% of the principals reported an
exemplary use of scheduling an interdisciplinary team
organization in a common block of time in common spaces
(Item 8), while 36.3% of the principals in the study sample
reported an effective use of this practice. The mean rating
for Item 8 was 2.44.

Team membership representing the basic academic subjects
as well as teachers from the exploratory or elective areas
(Item 9) yielded a mean rating of 2.55. The exemplary use of
this practice was reported by 18.2% of the principals, while
effective use of this practice was reported by 34.8% of the
respondents. Principals also reported a 30.3% frequency of
present, but in need of revision response for this form of
team structure.

Item 11, which states that a common daily period is provided for team members to plan, was reported by 42.4% of the principals as being absent in their school. This practice was present and considered exemplary by 28.8% of the principals and an effective use was reported by 21.2% of the respondents. The mean rating for Item 11 was 2.36.

A mean rating of 3.02 was reported for Item 12, heterogeneous grouping strategies employed within teams and across the middle school program. Fifty-three percent of the principals reported this practice as present and considered effective, while 28.8% considered the practice as exemplary in their program.

Principals in the study sample reported an absence of regrouping students with different classmates for three or more classes during the school day (Item 13) at a 33.3% frequency. A 2.41 mean rating for this practice was reported. The effective use of this regrouping practice was reported by 40.8% of the principals, while 16.7% reported this practice as present and considered exemplary.

Single-track instructional organization practices. The mean ratings for the five single track instructional organization practices ranged from 2.40 to 3.04.

Thirty-two percent of the single-track principals rated their school as exemplary in scheduling an interdisciplinary team organization in a common block of time in common spaces (Item 8), with 28% reporting an effective rating of use. The mean rating for this practice was 2.64. Item 9, which states

that team membership represents the basic academic subjects as well as teachers from the exploratory or elective areas, was rated as exemplary by 16% and effective by 28% of the single-track principals. Thirty-six percent of the principals rated this practice as present, but in need of revision. The mean rating for Item 9 was 2.40.

The use of a common daily planning period provided for team members to plan (Item 11) was rated exemplary by 40%, effective by 16%, and absent by 36% of the single-track principals. The mean rating for Item 11 was 2.60. Fifty-six percent of the single-track principals reported an effective use of heterogeneous grouping strategies employed within teams and across the middle school program (Item 12), while 28% considered the practice of heterogeneous grouping strategies as exemplary in their school. The mean rating for Item 12 was 3.04.

The effective use of regrouping students with different classmates for three or more classes during the school day (Item 13) was reported by 52% of the single-track principals, and 20% of the respondents reported an exemplary use of this regrouping practice. The mean rating for Item 13 was 2.27.

Multi-track instructional organization practices. The mean ratings for the five multi-track instructional organization practices ranged from 2.23 to 2.95.

An examination of Table 8 revealed that 41.5% of the multi-track principals reported the effective use of an interdisciplinary team organization scheduled in a common

block of time in common spaces (Item 8), while only 7.3%
reported an exemplary use of this practice. The mean rating
for Item 8 was 2.32. Item 9, which states that team
membership represents the basic academic subjects as well as
teachers from the exploratory or elective areas was reported
as exemplary in use by 19.5% of the principals and effective
in use by 41.5% of the principals. The mean rating for Item
9 was 2.32.

Item 11, which states that a common daily period is
provided for team members to plan, was reported absent by
46.3% of the principals. Twenty-two percent reported an
exemplary use of this common planning time, and 24.4% of the
multi-track principals considered this practice as used
effectively. The mean rating for Item 11 was 2.23.
Heterogeneous grouping strategies employed within teams and
across the middle school program (Item 12) was reported as
effective by 53.7% of the multi-track principals. Exemplary
use of heterogeneous grouping strategies was reported by
26.8% of the multi-track principals. The mean rating for
Item 12 was 2.95.

Multi-track principals reported an absence of the
practice of regrouping students with different classmates for
three or more classes during the school day (Item 13) at a
frequency of 41.4%. Effective use of this regrouping
strategy was reported by 34.2% of the multi-track principals,
while 14.6% considered the use of this practice as exemplary.
The mean rating for Item 13 was 2.23.

Ratings of Teacher Guidance Practices

Items 10, 15, 16, and 21 in the survey instrument represent statements that described middle school teacher guidance practices. As shown in Table 8, organizational arrangements that encourage long-term, teacher-student relationships (Item 10) were reported as absent by 47% of the principals. The mean rating for Item 10 was 1.86.

Item 15, which states that teacher based homeroom advisory groups meet regularly, was reported as exemplary by 24.2% of the principals, and as effectively used by 31.8%. The mean rating for Item 15 was 2.52. Principals indicated that an activities program that provides for participation on a regular basis for all students (Item 16) was used in an exemplary fashion in 31.8% of the schools. Overall, 31.8% of the principals also reported the effective use of a regularly scheduled activities program. The mean rating for Item 16 was 2.52.

Item 21, which states that students are assigned to the same homebase or advisory teacher for each year that they are enrolled in the middle school program was reported absent by 62.2% of the principals The mean rating for Item 21 was 1.73. An exemplary use of this practice was reported by 10.6% of the principals and 13.6% reported the effective use of this practice.

Single-track teacher guidance practices. As shown in Table 8, 48% of the single-track principals reported an absence of organizational arrangements that encourage long-

term teacher-student relationships (Item 10). The mean rating for Item 10 was 1.80. Four percent of the single-track principals reported this organizational arrangement as exemplary in use. Item 15, which states that teacher based homeroom/advisory groups meet regularly, was reported as exemplary by 32% of the single-track principals, while 28% reported an effective use of this practice. The mean rating for Item 15 was 2.64.

The exemplary use of an activities program that provides for participation by all students on a regularly scheduled basis (Item 16) was reported by 32% of the single-track principals. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents reported the effective use of the practice. The mean rating for Item 16 was 2.84. Thirty-two percent of the single-track principals reported this practice as present, but in need of revision.

Fifty-six percent of the single-track principals indicated an absence of the practice of assigning students to the same homebase or advisory teacher for each year that they are enrolled in the middle school program (Item 21). The mean rating for Item 21 was 1.88. Twelve percent of the principals reported an exemplary use of this practice and 20% an effective use.

Multi-track teacher guidance practice. The mean ratings for the four teacher guidance practices ranged from 1.63 to 2.85.

Organizational arrangements that encourage long-term teacher-student relationships (Item 10), were reported absent by 43.9% of the multi-track principals. As shown in Table 8, 22% reported that this practice was present, but in need of revision. Nearly 5% of the multi-track principals reported an exemplary use of these organizational arrangements and 29.3% considered this practice as used effectively. The mean rating for Item 10 was 1.95.

Item 15, which states that teacher based homeroom/advisory groups meet regularly, was reported as used effectively by 34.1% of the multi-track principals. Advisory group practices were reported exemplary in use by 19.5% of the respondents. The mean rating for Item 15 was 2.44.

Nearly 32% of the multi-track principals indicated that an activities program that provides for participation on a regular basis for all students (Item 16) was used in an exemplary manner. The effective use of a regularly scheduled activities program was reported by 34.1% of the multi-track principals. The mean rating for Item 16 was 2.85.

Student assignment to the same homebase or advisory teacher for each year enrolled in the middle school program (Item 21) was reported absent by 65.8% of the multi-track principals. The effective and exemplary use of this practice were reported by 9.8% of the multi-track principals. A mean rating of 1.63 was reported for Item 21.

Middle School Instructional Methodology Practices

Practices pertaining to instructional methodology were represented by Items 14, 19, and 22 in the survey instrument. As shown in Table 8, the mean ratings for these practices by all schools ranged from 2.14 to 2.44.

Item 14, which states that teachers vary the schedule within the academic block to accommodate instructional activities, was reported absent by 37.9% of the principals. As presented in Table 8, 30.3% of the respondents indicated an effective use of varying the schedule to accommodate instructional activities, while 10.6% reported an exemplary use of this practice. Overall, the mean rating for Item 14 was 2.14.

Teams of teachers carrying out thematic and problem-centered units on a regular basis (Item 19), as shown in Table 8, was reported as present, but in need of revision by 37.9% of the principals. The effective use of this instructional practice was reported by 34.8% of the responding principals, with 12.1% indicating an exemplary use of the practice. The mean rating for Item 19 was 2.44.

An examination of Table 8 indicates that classes organized into cooperative learning groups where students earn rewards for mastery of learning skills (Item 22), was reported by 40.9% of the principals to be used effectively. Principals reported a 36.4% rate of present, but in need of revision response to the use of this practice The exemplary use of cooperative learning strategies was reported by 6% of

the respondents. A mean rating of 2.36 was reported for Item
22.

Single-track instructional methodology ratings. As
shown in Table 8, the mean ratings for statements pertaining
to practices of instructional methodology ranged from 2.44 to
2.72 as reported by single-track principals.

Single-track principals reported a 44% frequency of
exemplary use for teachers varying the schedule within the
academic block to accommodate instructional activities
(Item 14). Sixteen percent of the single-track principals
indicated an exemplary use of the practice. A mean rating of
2.52 was reported for Item 14.

Teams of teachers that carry out thematic and problem-
centered units on a regular basis (Item 19) was reported as
used effectively by 44% of the single-track principals.
Twenty percent of the principals considered this practice as
exemplary. The mean rating for Item 19 was 2.72.

As shown in Table 8, classes organized into cooperative
learning groups where students earn rewards for mastery of
learning skills (Item 22) was reported as used effectively by
44% of the single-track principals. Thirty-two percent
indicated that the practice of cooperative learning
strategies was present, but in need of revision. Eight
percent of the single-track principals reported the exemplary
use of the cooperative learning practice. The mean rating for
Item 22 was 2.44.

Multi-track instructional methodology ratings. An examination of Table 8 reveals the mean rating of the multi-track instructional methodology practices ranged from 1.90 to 2.32.

As presented in Table 8, 46.3% of the multi-track principals reported the absence of teachers varying the schedule within the academic block to accommodate instructional activities (Item 14). The effective use of this instructional strategy was reported by 22% of the multi-track principals, with 7.3% reporting an exemplary use. The mean rating for Item 14 was 1.90.

Item 19, which states that teams of teachers carry out thematic and problem-centered units on a regular basis, was reported present, but in need of revision by 46.3% of the multi-track principals. Nearly 30% of the multi-track principals reported the effective use of this practice and 7.3% considered the use of thematic and problem-centered units exemplary. The mean rating for Item 17 was 2.27.

Classes organized into cooperative learning groups where students earn rewards for mastery of learning skills (Item 22), was reported present, but in need of revision by 39% of the multi-track principals. Thirty-nine percent of the multi-track respondents also reported the effective use of this instructional practice and 4.9% indicated an exemplary use. The mean rating for Item 22 was 2.32.

Middle School Orientation and Articulation Practices

Items 23, 24, and 25 of the survey instrument were designed to obtain data concerning middle school orientation and articulation practices. As shown in Table 8, the mean rating for these items ranged from 1.92 to 2.80.

Item 23, which states that parents are formally recruited and trained to work as school volunteers was reported absent by 36.4% of the principals. Nearly 38% of the principals indicated that this practice was present, but in need of revision. Effective use of parents working as school volunteers was reported by 22.7% of the respondents, and 3% indicated the exemplary use of this practice. The mean rating for Item 23 was 1.92.

Workshops offered to parents on school programs and the nature of early adolescence (Item 24), was reported present, but in need of revision by 39.4% of the principals. The exemplary use of parent workshops was indicated by 12.1% of the respondents, and 24.2% reported an effective use of parent workshops. The mean rating for Item 24 was 2.24.

Item 25, which states that policies and practices facilitate transition both from the elementary school and to the high school was reported as being used effectively by 40.9% of the principals, while 22.7% reported the exemplary use of transition practices. About thirty percent of the principals reported that this practice was present, but in need of revision. The mean rating for the use of transition policies and practices was 2.80.

Single-track orientation and articulation practices.
The mean ratings for the single-track orientation and
articulation practices ranged from 2.04 to 2.64.

Item 23, which states that parents are formally
recruited and trained to work as school volunteers, was
reported as present, but in need of revision by 56% of the
single-track principals. Twenty-four percent indicated an
effective use of this practice, while none of the single-
track principals indicated an exemplary use of parents as
school volunteers. As shown in Table 8, the mean rating for
Item 23 was 2.04.

Workshops offered to parents on school programs and the
nature of early adolescence (Item 24) was reported present,
but in need of revision by 40% of the single-track
respondents. Eight percent of the principals reported
exemplary use of parent workshops, as shown in Table 8, while
24% of the principals indicated an effective use of the
practice. The mean rating for Item 24 was 2.12.

As presented in Table 8, 16% of the single-track
principals reported the exemplary use of policies and
practices that facilitate transition both from the elementary
school and to the high school (Item 25). Forty percent of
the single-track principals indicated an effective use of
transition policies and practices, while 36% reported these
practices as present, but in need of revision. The mean
rating for Item 25 was 2.64.

Multi-track orientation and articulation ratings. The
mean ratings for the multi-track orientation and articulation
practices ranged from 1.80 to 2.90.

The formal recruitment and training of parents to work
as school volunteers (Item 23) was reported absent by 48.8%
of the multi-track principals. As shown in Table 8, 19.5%
indicated the practice as effective and 4.9% rated the use of
parents as school volunteers as exemplary. The mean rating
for Item 23 was 1.80.

Item 24, which states that workshops are offered to
parents on school programs and the nature of early
adolescence, was rated exemplary by 14.6% of the multi-track
principals. The effective use of this practice was reported
by 26.8% of the multi-track principals, while 36.6% indicated
the practice was present, but in need of revision. Twenty-
two percent of the multi-track principals reported the
absence of parent workshops in their school. The mean rating
for Item 24 was 2.34.

An examination of Table 8, indicates that 26.8% of the
multi-track principals reported the exemplary use of policies
and practices that facilitate transition both from the
elementary school and to the high school (Item 25). The
effective use of transition practices was indicated by 41.5%
of the multi-track respondents. The mean rating for Item 25
was 2.90.

Rank Order of Mean Ratings of Practices

As shown in Table 9, five of the 18 middle school practices had mean ratings in the range of 2.80 to 3.17. These practices were: Item 17, curriculum characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied ($\bar{x}$ = 3.17); Item 12, heterogeneous grouping strategies employed within teams and across the middle school program ($\bar{x}$ = 3.02); Item 18, a broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences for personal growth and development ($\bar{x}$ = 2.91); Item 16, an activities program that provides for participation by all students on a regularly scheduled basis ($\bar{x}$ = 2.85); and Item 25, policies that facilitate transition both from the elementary school and to the high school ($\bar{x}$ = 2.80). These items were ranked one to five respectively.

Ten of the 18 practices yielded mean ratings between 2.14 and 2.59. Practices with mean ratings within this range were: Item 20, teams of teachers have at least some control over the schedule, the budget, and the curriculum ($\bar{x}$ = 2.59); Item 9, team membership represents the basic academic subjects as well as teachers from the exploratory or elective areas ($\bar{x}$ = 2.55); and Item 15, teacher based homeroom/advisory groups meet regularly ($\bar{x}$ = 2.52). These items were ranked six to eight respectively. Item 8, an inter-disciplinary team organization is scheduled in a common block of time in common spaces ($\bar{x}$ = 2.44), and Item 19, teams of teachers carry out thematic and problem-centered units on

a regular basis ($\bar{x}$ = 2.44) were tied for rank 9.5. Item 13, students are regrouped with different classmates for three or more classes during the school day ($\bar{x}$ = 2.41) was ranked eleventh. Item 11, a common daily period is provided for team members to plan ($\bar{x}$ = 2.36) and Item 22, classes are organized into cooperative learning groups where students earn rewards for mastery of learning skills ($\bar{x}$ = 2.36) were tied for rank 12.5. Item 24, workshops are offered to parents on school programs and the nature of early adolescence ($\bar{x}$ = 2.24); and Item 14, teachers vary the schedule within the academic block to accommodate instructional activities ($\bar{x}$ = 2.14) were ranked fourteen and fifteen respectively.

Three of the 18 middle school practices had a mean rating below 2.0, as reported in Table 8. Practices with a mean rating below 2.0 were: Item 23, parents are formally recruited and trained to work as school volunteers ($\bar{x}$ = 1.92); Item 10, organizational arrangements that encourage long-term, teacher-student relationships ($\bar{x}$ = 1.86) and Item 21, students are assigned to the same homebase or advisory teachers for each year that they are enrolled in the middle school program ($\bar{x}$ = 1.73). These items were ranked sixteen to eighteen respectively.

Middle School/YRE Scheduling and Grouping Schemes

This portion of the chapter describes the results pertaining to scheduling and grouping schemes that may be utilized in middle school and/or YRE program articulation.

Table 9

Rank Order of Mean Ratings for the Middle School Program Practices

Item #	Program Descriptor	$\bar{X}$	SD	RANK
17.	The curriculum is characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied.	3.17	.75	1
12.	Heterogeneous grouping strategies are employed within teams and across the middle school program.	3.02	.87	2
18.	A broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences for personal growth and development (including elective courses, independent or group projects, mini-courses) is offered.	2.91	.93	3
16.	An activities program that provides for participation by all students is offered on a regularly scheduled basis.	2.85	.99	4
25.	Policies and practices that facilitate transition both from the elementary school and to the high school exist.	2.80	.86	5
20.	Teams of teachers have at least some control over the schedule, the budget, and the curriculum.	2.59	.94	6
9.	Team membership represents the basic academic subjects (i.e., Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies) as well as teachers from the exploratory or elective areas.	2.55	.97	7
15.	Teacher based homeroom/advisory groups meet regularly (one or more times a week).	2.52	1.15	8
19.	Teams of teachers carry out thematic and problem-centered units on a regular basis.	2.44	.89	9.5
8.	An interdisciplinary team organization is scheduled in a common block of time in common spaces.	2.44	1.05	9.5
13.	Students are regrouped with different classmates for three or more classes during the school day.	2.41	1.15	11

Table 9--continued.

Item #	Program Descriptor	$\bar{X}$	SD	RANK
11.	A common daily period is provided for team members to plan	2.36	1.28	12.5
22.	Classes are organized into cooperative learning groups; students earn rewards for mastery of learning skills.	2.36	.83	12.5
24.	Workshops are offered to parents on school programs and the nature of early adolescence.	2.24	.96	14
14.	Teachers vary the schedule within the academic block to accommodate instructional activities.	2.14	1.04	15
23.	Parents are formally recruited and trained to work as school volunteers.	1.92	.84	16
10.	There are organizational arrangements that encourage long-term, teacher-student relationships, such as multi-age grouping and student-teacher progression.	1.86	.94	17
21.	Students are assigned to the same homebase or advisory teacher for each year that they are enrolled in the middle school program.	1.73	1.05	18

Note: (1) = absent
       (2) = present, but in need of revision
       (3) = present and considered effective
       (4) = present and considered exemplary

Data collected in Part III of the survey instrument reflected
(1) factors representing various organizational schemes used
in middle school program implementation, and (2) scheduling
and grouping schemes employed in multi-track high schools.

Middle School Organizational Schemes

Middle school principals of year-round schools indicated
a wide range of the use of grouping schemes by grade levels.
The utilization of these schemes ranged from no use of any of
these strategies in five schools (8%) to the use of all six
schemes in two schools (3%). Thirty-two percent of the
principals reported a combination of use of four of the
grouping schemes in their schools while 9% used five of the
six grouping strategies. Fourteen percent of the year-round
middle schools indicated that three of the schemes were
employed within their school organization, and 21% of the
principals reported the concurrent use of two schemes. The
remaining 12% reported the utilization of one of the grouping
strategies presented.

As shown in Table 10, teachers were organized according
to the students they had in common. Having one teacher
typically teach one subject to one grade level (Item 26c) was
the most commonly used organizational approach for grouping
and scheduling reported by the year-round middle school
principals. The use of this practice commonly referred to as
grade level interdisciplinary team, was reported by 74.2% of
the principals. Nearly 61% of the respondents indicated the
use of students having daily relationships with one teacher

and balanced by instruction from other teachers who work together in interdisciplinary teams (Item 26b). This practice is often referred to as the core-style grouping scheme. The use of students and teachers organized by grade levels in different parts of the school with most teachers not sharing the same students (Item 26a), also known as gradewide interdisciplinary teams, was reported by 59.1% of the principals.

As shown in Table 10, the school-within-a-school approach, which divides the school into "houses" or sub schools that are representative of the larger school and retains the basic format of grade level teams (Item 26e), was reported in use by 53.5% of the responding year-round principals. Departmentalized teams where teachers in the same subject specialization plan and teach together, creating small and large group activities by combining and regrouping students (Item 26f) were used by 30.3% of the schools. Long-term or multi-year teams that are organized so that teachers remain with a group of students for the duration of the middle school (Item 26d) were the least used of the grouping and scheduling schemes. The principals reported 24.2% use of multi-age grouping on student-teacher progression teams.

As shown in Table 11, both single-track and multi-track middle schools exhibited greater use of gradewide interdisciplinary teams, 84% and 66%, respectively. The least commonly used schemes reported by single-track principals were long-term teams (24%) and departmentalized

Table 10

Use of Middle School Scheduling/Grouping Schemes by Grade Level (N=66)

Middle School Scheduling/Grouping Scheme	No Use	6 Only	7 Only	8 Only	6.7	7.8	6.7.8
				Percentage of Use (%)			
26a. Students and teachers organized by grade levels in different parts of the school; most of the teachers will not share the same students.	42.6	10.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.7	28.8
26b. Students have daily relationships with one teacher and balanced by instruction from other teachers who work together in interdisciplinary teams.	41.0	10.6	4.5	0.0	0.0	13.6	31.9
26c. Teachers are grouped according to the students they have in common; one teacher typically teaches one subject to one grade level.	25.8	4.5	4.5	4.5	1.5	28.8	30.4
26d. Multi-age grouping or student-teacher progression teams are organized so that teachers remain with a group of students for the duration of the middle school.	73.8	3.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	9.1	10.6
26e. Our school is divided "houses" or subschools which are representative of the larger school, that retains the basic format of grade level teams.	47.5	1.5	0.0	1.5	1.5	15.2	33.3
26f. Teachers in the same subject specialization plan, and teach together. They create small and large group activities by combining and regrouping students	68.9	4.5	1.5	1.5	3.0	7.6	12.2

teams (24%). The use of departmentalized teams was reported
by 27% of the multi-track principals. The greatest
discrepancies in the level of use pertaining to these
grouping strategies occurred in the use of grade level
interdisciplinary teams and the long-term team approach.
Eighty-four percent single-track schools used grade level
interdisciplinary teams in comparison to 66% of the multi-
track schools. Twenty-four percent of single-track schools
used the long-term team approach, while 32% of the multi-
track schools also used this grouping strategy. Single-
track and multi-track principals reported comparable levels
of use for gradewide interdisciplinary teams, core-style
grouping, school-within-a-school, and departmentalized teams.

Table 11

Single and Multi-Track Use of Middle School Grouping Schemes

Middle School Scheduling/Grouping Scheme	Attendance Grouping System	
	Single-Track (N=25)	Multi-Track (N=41)
26a. Gradewide Interdisciplinary Teams	60%	59%
26b. Core-Style Grouping	64%	59%
26c. Grade-Level Interdisciplinary Teams	84%	66%
26d. Long-Term Teams	24%	32%
26e. School-Within-A-School	48%	51%
26f. Departmentalized Teams	24%	27%

Scheduling/Grouping Options for Multi-Track Programs

Tracking, or enrolling students in specific ability or performance based classes or programs placed on one track (Item 27) represents one option for providing scheduling flexibility on a multi-track design, as shown in Table 12. Twenty-two percent of the multi-track principals reported the use of this tracking option. The semester registration scheme (Item 28) whereby students are re-registered into year-long courses at the semester was used by 46.3% of the multi-track school principals. Rainbow classes, or scheduling students from all tracks into the same class, allows more choices for students on all tracks (Item 29). Rainbow classes were reported in use by 61% of the principals of multi-track schools.

An examination of Table 13 shows that cross-grade scheduling (Item 30), where elective classes are offered on more than one grade level allowing more students to be scheduled into their first choice of electives, was reported in use by 58.5% of the multi-track principals. Cross-track scheduling (Item 31), whereby students are combined from two tracks into a single class when there is insufficient registration for a class on one track, was reported in use by 49.3% of the multi-track principals. Principals of multi-track schools indicated a 43.9% use of single-semester registration (Item 32), which combines elective offerings so that the same courses are taught during one semester rather

than being offered alternately each semester. The scheduling
or grouping option reported most frequently by the multi-
track principals (65.9%) was exploratory/mini-courses, or the
use of short duration exploratory courses 6, 9, or 12 weeks
in length (Item 33).

Approximately 15%, or N=6, of the schools reported the
use of one of the scheduling options described, and 39%, or
N=16, employed two of the approaches concurrently. Two
principals (4.9%) indicated the use of three of the
scheduling options and five (12.2%) reported using four of
the schemes in a concurrent manner. Nine principals (22%)
reported using five scheduling options in their organization,
two (4.9%) reported the use of six of the grouping
approaches, and one (2.4%) reported an implementation of all
seven scheduling schemes. Two principals also indicated the
use of grouping strategies in their organization other than
those described in survey Items 27 through 34. A special
interest class program was reported in use across all grades
in one school containing grades 6-8. Another school that
grouped 7th and 8th grade students heterogeneously used a
scheme which provided the same offerings for all students.

Middle School/YRE Program Design and Implementation

A presentation of the data concerning principals'
opinions regarding factors affecting the implementation of
the middle school program design are presented in this
portion of the chapter. The data collected related to

Table 12

Use of Scheduling/Grouping Options for Multi-Track Programs by Grade Level (N=41)

Multi-Track Program Scheduling/Grouping Options	No Use	Percentage of Use (%)					
		6 Only	7 Only	8 Only	6&7	7&8	6,7&8
27. Students are enrolled in specific ability or performance-based classes, programs are placed on one track.	78.2	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	9.8	9.8
28. Students are re-registered into year-long courses at the semester; year-long classes are scheduled as two semester classes.	53.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	17.1	26.8
29. Students from all tracks are scheduled into the same class so that more choice are available for students on all tracks.	39.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	22.0	36.6
30. Classes are offered on more than one grade level allowing more students to be scheduled into their first choice of electives.	41.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.6	22.0
31. Students are combined from two tracks into a single class when registration is insufficient for a class on one track.	56.2	2.4	0.0	2.4	0.0	24.4	14.6
32. Elective offerings are combined so that the same courses are taught in one semester rather than being offered alternately each semester, thus allowing more students to be scheduled into their choice of electives.	56.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	19.5	19.5
33. Students are scheduled into short duration exploratory courses which are 6, 9, or 12 weeks in length. Exploratory courses are grouped together in order for students to have a variety of curriculum opportunities.	34.1	7.3	7.3	0.0	5.0	15.9	26.8

(1) statements characterizing program implementation in multi-track year-round middle schools, and (2) open-ended items concerning the principals' perceptions of benefits and disadvantages of middle school/YRE program implementation in single and multi-track schools.

Program Implementation in Multi-Track Middle Schools

Principals were asked to rate each statement within the context of middle school program implementation on a multi-track year-round schedule, based on their experiences. Based on a five-point scale, the ratings were used to determine the respondents' level of agreement using the following scale: (1) = strongly disagree, (2) = disagree, (3) = undecided, (4) = agree, and (5) = strongly agree. In Table 13 the responses of 41 middle school principals whose schools operated on a multi-track year-round schedule are presented.

As shown in Table 13, more than three fourths of the multi-track middle school principals participating in this study, either strongly disagreed (36.6%) or disagreed (39%) that multi-track programs provided sufficient flexibility that did not compromise lower enrollment and specialized programs (Item 35). Only 17.1% of the principals indicated that these programs were uncompromised by the multi-track format. About one-half of the responding principals disagreed that sequencing of courses and course continuity are easily integrated within the curriculum on a multi-track schedule (Item 36). Twenty percent of the principals indicated strong disagreement and 29.3% reported

disagreement. About forty percent of the principals, however, reported that courses were easily integrated on a multi-track schedule, while 12.2% were reportedly undecided about the curricular implications of this YRE approach. Of the multi-track principals who responded to the survey, 40% indicated that special mini-courses were necessary to fit year-round program implementation (Item 37), 27.5% reported agreement and 12.5% reported strong agreement. About 37% of the principals expressed disagreement that these mini-courses are necessary for YRE implementation, 17% reported strong disagreement and 19.5% disagreed, while 22% of the respondents were undecided.

Nearly thirty-seven percent of the principals' agreed that teachers were able to develop strong relationships with students in the shorter time periods for YRE (Item 38), 24.4% agreed and 12.2% strongly agreed. About 30% of the multi-track, middle school principals responded that they were undecided about the strength of teacher-student relationships in the shorter time periods for YRE in comparison to the traditional calendar. Approximately 40% of the middle school YRE principals reported disagreement regarding the teachers' concern to monitor and supervise make-up or remedial work during intersessions (Item 39), 11.2% strongly disagreed and 33.3% disagreed pertaining to this item. Thirty-four percent of the principals agreed (17% agreed and 17% strongly disagreed) that these concerns were expressed by teachers, while 17% were undecided. Seventy-five percent of the middle

grade YRE principals agreed that performing arts and extracurricular activities programs require special adjustments to ensure greater student participation (Item 40). Of those agreeing, 43.9% strongly agreed and 31.7% agreed. Principals who disagreed that special adjustments were required represented about 20% of the sample respondents, 4.9% strongly disagreed and 14.6% disagreed. Over 50% of the multi-track principals disagreed that expansion of the curriculum beyond basic courses and existing opportunities for elective courses within a multi-track format was easily done (Item 41), 14.6% strongly disagreed and 36.6% disagreed with this statement. Nearly 15% of the principals were undecided that curriculum expansion was easily done within the multi-track program, while 29.3% agreed and 4.9% disagreed with this item.

Benefits and Disadvantages of

Middle School/YRE Program Implementation

In the open-ended questions listed in Part V, principals were asked to describe the major benefits or disadvantages of implementing the middle school program on a year-round schedule in comparison to the traditional school calendar. The responses of the multi-track and single-track principals are reported here.

Multi-Track Benefits. Nine of the 41 multi-track principals reported that the intermittent breaks or vacations provided by the year-round schedule were beneficial to teachers and students. Principals reported that stress was

Table 13

Implementation of Middle School Program on Multi-Track Design

	Multi-Track Program Characterization	Level of Agreement (%)				
		1	2	3	4	5
35.	Multi-track year-round programs provide flexibility that allows for lower enrollment and specialized programs to be uncompromised.	36.6	39.0	7.3	9.8	7.3
36.	Sequencing of courses and course continuity are easily integrated within the curriculum on a multi-track schedule.	19.5	29.3	12.2	31.7	7.3
37.	Special mini-courses are necessary to fit year-round program implementation on a multi-track schedule.	17.0	19.5	22.0	29.3	12.2
38.	Teachers are able to develop strong relationships with students in the shorter time periods for YRE in comparison to the traditional calendar.	9.8	24.4	29.3	24.4	12.2
39.	Teachers have expressed concerns about their ability to supervise and monitor make-up and remedial work during intersessions.	9.8	29.3	17.0	17.0	17.0
40.	Performing Arts and extracurricular activities programs require special adjustments to ensure greater student participation such as, rotating schedules and off-track participation.	4.9	14.6	4.9	31.7	43.9
41.	The multi-track YRE curriculum is easily expanded beyond basic courses and opportunities for elective courses exist.	14.6	36.6	14.6	29.3	4.9

Note: (1) = strongly disagree
       (2) = disagree
       (3) = undecided
       (4) = agree
       (5) = strongly agree

reduced and resulted in less "burn out for staff and students", since both groups were "fresher with periodic vacations." Fifteen principals also reported that the organization of students by tracks created benefits associated with stronger teacher-to-teacher and student-to-teacher interaction. Respondents indicated that this scheme resulted in such benefits as "a better sense of community," because "tracks became "the basis for school-within-a-school" and were easier to define and build as expanded teams," enhancing teacher teams. Additionally, principals reported that teaming organization was facilitated by this approach, creating a "better sense of community" and a tendency for teachers "to work together as a more cohesive unit." Responses from nine principals addressed curriculum and instructional benefits associated with YRE. The shorter breaks between instruction were viewed by the multi-track principals as being an "on-going instructional program" where continuity afforded "little loss during breaks" for students. Increased retention rates were specified by two of the principals from their instructional programs as a result of the shorter breaks between instruction. Four of the multi-track principals related that the remediation that occurs in the intersessions was beneficial to students having academic difficulties. Six principals reported that multi-track YRE resulted in a "better use of facility" and that it accommodated "larger numbers of students in existing facilities." No benefits or advantages were reported by four

of the multi-track principals who viewed this approach as
"very difficult" or "very complicated."

    <u>Multi-Track Disadvantages.</u> Scheduling problems were
cited by eleven principals who reported that "elective
classes were difficult to schedule" and that multi-tracking
did not allow for flexibility to meet student requests."
Principals also stated that difficulties with the master
schedule led to an inequitable exploratory program,
overcrowding of "certain tracks of high preference," and the
inability to "offer some electives for each cycle." The
inflexibility of multi-track scheduling related to
curricular, instructional, and staffing matters was cited by
thirteen of the principals. Matters such as class size,
limitation of special programs, limiting of "elective
teachers on each track," and teachers being required to
"teach multi-levels" were reported as disadvantages.
Exploratory teachers reportedly struggled "with the monthly
change of students." The inability to provide a variety of
curricular experiences for students, the feasibility of
scheduling year-long classes, and the instructional
difficulties associated with rainbow classes were also
associated with scheduling inflexibility.

    Eight of the 41 multi-track principals reported
difficulties in communication with staff members. These
problems seemed to stem from a fragmentation of staff members
who were off-track during any given track cycle. Providing
"uninterrupted time for planning," "progress toward further

restructuring," and difficulties in implementing "shared decision-making among all staff" were reported disadvantages associated with communication difficulties. Seven principals indicated that their stress and that of other 11 or 12 month personnel was another limitation associated with the multi-track program. An "increase in responsibilities and coordination" the lack of time or "breaks to gear up" and "no down time to reflect, plan, or review" for administrators were reported as factors that contributed to stress and burn out among administrative personnel.

Single-track benefits. Of the 25 single-track principals who responded, 22 reported that benefits of the YRE program were related to curricular and/or instructional considerations. Opportunities for remediation and enrichment were "varied and flexible," while "more efficient instruction," "integration of units," and "less time spent on review" were seen as benefits of single-track YRE. Flexibility was reported as an enhancement to "adjusting student schedules." The ability to "give extra assignments while off-track," the provision of "time for teachers to review/revise/assess student needs, during intervals," and "extended learning through reteaching," were other advantages of YRE. Instructional outcomes of "better test scores," "response time of students," the retention of material," and "decreases in academic loss" were also reported by single-track principals.

An "improved school climate," "better staff morale," and "better student discipline" were among the benefits reported by 14 single-track middle school principals. Periodic breaks "reduced student and teacher stress" and allowed "teachers and students to work more effectively together. Benefits related to improvements in climate and/or morale were reported by 14 of the single-track principals who stated that there was a "reduction of stress for both teachers and students" and the opportunity for "students and staff to recharge."

Single-Track Disadvantages. Scheduling difficulties were reported by seven principals in the curricular and/or extracurricular program areas. Developing schedules for curricular offerings restricted electives, performance classes, honor classes, "exploratory positions," and "year-long coverage for special needs." Three principals reported that year-round athletic and extracurricular activities were adversely affected. Instructional difficulties were cited by four principals who reported a loss of "time for teacher prep for new school year," the "faster pace, short periods of off-time," and intersessions whereby "little real remediation" occurred. Coordination or articulation with other schools' programs was cited as a disadvantage by three principals. The "alignment with high school schedule," "interfacing with traditional high school schedule," and difficulty for middle school students attending a year-round program "of other

middle schools in the area are out for the summer" were reported as disadvantages for single-track YRE.

Properly staffing the school programs in order to effectively coordinate or implement programs was reported as a disadvantage by five of the principals. They indicated that staff limitations made it "very difficult to schedule a school-within-a-school." Principals reported that team composition changed from year to year due to the changing numbers in YRE and traditional schools, "school-within-a-school" required "extended contracts or additional contracted staff to accommodate equity in electives," and "many teachers felt disenfranchised from the rest of the staff due to almost all functions occurring within their track." Hiring new personnel in a short time period of 5 to 6 weeks was a difficult experience for one of the principals. Two single-track principals expressed administrative disadvantages of "constant work for the administration" and the need to perform some duties "traditionally performed at certain time periods - reports, etc." during vacation times.

<u>Summary</u>

The findings in this study indicate that principals rated the recommended middle school practices in year-round schools with considerable variation in prevalence. Curriculum practices appear to be the most prevalent in year-round middle schools, while practices in the domains of instructional organization, teacher guidance, instructional methodology, and orientation and articulation domains were

more widely varied. The principals indicated that the
single-track format permitted more flexibility in the use of
instructional organization and instructional methodology
practices than the multi-track format. Multi-track
principals reported a more prevalent use of middle school
orientation and articulation practices than single-track
principals.

A variety of concurrent scheduling and grouping
strategies were reported that highlight the need to provide
both scheduling and instructional flexibility. The findings
suggest that specialized programs, program articulation, and
teacher-student relationships may be constrained through the
multi-track design. Principals also reported that
intersessions were beneficial to teachers and students, but
that internal communication suffered from a fragmentation of
staff members. Multi-track principals expressed concerns
about inflexible scheduling considerations, while single-
track principals reported more flexibility in the
instructional program. Overall, the findings suggest that
year-round middle school programs encounter many of the same
problems found in high school programs.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify the common program-related and organizational practices utilized in YRE U.S. public middle schools. Data were obtained from middle school principals whose schools were operating on a year-round calendar during the 1993-94 school year. A survey instrument consisting of 43 items was used to gather information related to practices of middle school and YRE organizational approaches, characterizing conditions of program implementation. One hundred twenty-seven year-round middle schools, containing grade 7, were identified using the Twentieth Reference Directory of Year-Round Education Programs for the 1993-94 School Year (National Association of Year-Round Education, 1993). Sixty-six of the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

This study was designed to address the following questions:

1) What program practices are prevalent to middle schools operating on a year-round calendar?

2) What organizational practices appear to be common to middle schools operating on a year-round calendar?

3) What were the factors that principals reported as
   facilitating and constraining program implementation
   of a year-round schedule?

This chapter contains (1) findings pertaining to the
research questions, (2) conclusions from the study results,
(3) implications of the study findings, (4) recommendations
for future research, and (5) a summary.

Findings Pertaining to the Research Questions

Question 1

What program practices are prevalent to middle schools
operating on a year-round calendar?

On the basis of the mean rankings, principals indicated
that five practices were most prevalent in year-round middle
schools. These practices were: (1) a curriculum
characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is
active and varied; (2) heterogeneous grouping strategies
employed within teams and across the middle school program;
(3) a broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance
experiences for personal growth and development; (4) an
activities program that provides for participation by all
students on a regularly scheduled basis; and (5) policies and
practices that facilitate transition both from the elementary
school and to the high school.

Curriculum Practices

Two of the five middle school practices found to be most
prevalent were in the program domain of curriculum. Item 17,
the curriculum is characterized by a core academic focus

where instruction is active and varied and Item 18, a broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences for personal growth and development is offered, yielded the first and third highest mean ratings, respectively. Item 20, which stated that teams of teachers have at least some control over the schedule, the budget, and the curriculum was ranked sixth by the study participants in the mean ratings of 18 survey items.

The mean ratings of item responses for single-track principals were higher for all three curriculum practices than the means for multi-track principals. Most notable was the difference between the means for Item 17, the curriculum is characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied, indicated by a mean rating of 3.40 by single-track principals and 3.02 for multi-track principals. This difference was a reflection in the disparity of exemplary use. Forty-eight percent of the single-track principals reported exemplary use of this practice as compared to 24% of the multi-track principals.

Instructional Organization Practices

The domain of instructional organization practices was addressed by five survey items. Item 12, heterogeneous grouping strategies are employed within teams and across the middle school program, had the second highest mean ranking for the 18 practices at 3.02. Two of the instructional organization practices reflected a greater dispersion of ratings than most of the practices as reported by principals.

Item 11, a common daily period is provided for team members to plan, was reported as exemplary by 30% of the study participants, while 40% indicated an absence of the practice. Item 13, students are regrouped with different classmates for three or more classes during the school day, was reported effective by 40% of the principals and absent by 33% of the respondents.

For Item 9, team membership represents the basic academic subjects as well as teachers from the exploratory or elective areas, was reported to be effectively used by 33% of the principals and 30% reported the practice as present, but in need of revision. Item 8, an interdisciplinary team organization is scheduled in a common block of time in common spaces, was reported effective by 33% of the principals and absent by 25% of the respondents.

Four of the five instructional organization practices reported by single-track principals had higher mean ratings than the means for multi-track principals. These differences were more substantial for three of the practices, ranging from .32 to .49, and were largely attributable to discrepancies in the reporting of exemplary or effective use. Item 8, an interdisciplinary team organization is scheduled in a common block of time in common spaces, was reported exemplary by 32% of the single-track principals and 7% of the multi-track principals. Forty percent of the single-track principals reported an exemplary use of Item 11, a common daily period is provided for team members to plan, as

compared to 20% of the multi-track principals. Fifty-two
percent of the single-track principals compared to 34% of the
multi-track principals reported an effective use of Item 13,
students are regrouped with different classmates for three or
more classes during the school day.

Teacher Guidance Practices

       Teacher guidance practices were represented by four
items in the survey instrument. A mean rating of 2.85 was
reported for Item 16, an activities program that provides for
participation by all students is offered on a regularly
scheduled basis. This practice had the fourth highest mean
rating among the 18 middle school practices. Item 10, there
are organizational arrangements that encourage long-term
teacher-student relationships, and Item 21, students are
assigned to the same homebase or advisory teacher for each
year they are enrolled in the middle school program, had the
lowest mean rating among the 18 practices in the survey.
Item 15, teacher based homeroom/advisory groups meet
regularly, exhibited the greatest dispersion of ratings by
principals for teacher guidance practices.

       Single-track and multi-track principals reported
comparable ratings for Item 16, an activities program that
provides for participation by all students is offered on a
regularly scheduled basis, with mean ratings of 2.84 and 2.85
respectively. Differences in mean ratings or frequency of
use were generally negligible for the three other teacher
guidance practices. However, Item 15, teacher based

homeroom/advisory groups meet regularly, reflected a
disparity in exemplary use. Thirty-two percent of the
single-track principals reported an exemplary use of this
practice, while 20% of the multi-track principals reported
the same.

Instructional Methodology Practices

Instructional methodology practices were addressed by
three survey items. Item 14, teachers vary the schedule
within the academic block to accommodate instructional
activities, exhibited the greatest dispersion of responses to
the instructional methodology practices and ranked fifteenth
among the mean ratings of the 18 items. Item 19, teams of
teachers carry out thematic and problem-centered units on a
regular basis, and Item 22, classes are organized into
cooperative learning groups where students earn rewards for
mastery of learning skills, was reported effective by nearly
41% of the principals. More than one-third of the study
participants reported this practice present and in need of
revision.

The mean ratings of all three instructional methodology
practices were higher for single-track principals than for
multi-track principals in the study. The most substantial
difference was for Item 14, teachers vary the schedule within
the academic block to accommodate instructional activities,
with a mean rating of 2.52 by single-track principals and
1.90 by multi-track principals. This disparity is reflected
in the ratings for effective and exemplary use. Forty-four

percent of the single-track principals reported effective use
of this practice and 16% reported an exemplary use, compared
to 22% of the multi-track principals who reported an
effective use and 7% who reported the exemplary use of this
practice. There was a mean rating of 2.72 for Item 19, teams
of teachers carry out thematic and problem-centered units on
a regular basis, as reported by single-track principals
compared to a mean rating of 2.27 reported by multi-track
principals. Forty-four percent of the single-track
principals reported an effective use of this practice
compared to 29% of the multi-track principals. Single-track
and multi-track principals reported the exemplary use at 20%
and 7% respectively.

Orientation and Articulation Practices

Orientation and articulation practices were represented
by three survey items. Item 25, policies and practices that
facilitate transition both from the elementary school and to
the high school exist, had the fifth highest mean of the 18
practices listed in the survey. Item 23, parents are
formally recruited and trained to work as school volunteers,
was sixteenth in the mean rankings of the 18 items. Item 24,
workshops are offered to parents on school programs and the
nature of early adolescence, yielded a mean that was ranked
fourteenth of the 18 practices. All three practices were
reported present, but in need of revision by more than 30% of
the principals.

Comparisons of ratings of use or mean ratings for two of
the three orientations and articulation practices were
negligible between single and multi-track principals.
However, Item 25, policies and practices that facilitate
transition both from the elementary school and to the high
school exist, yielded a mean rating of 2.90 by multi-track
principals compared to a mean rating of 2.64 by single-track
principals. The disparity in the use of this practice
between single and multi-track principals was reflected in
the ratings of exemplary use and present, but in need of
revision. Twenty-seven percent of the multi-track principals
compared to 16% of the single-track principals reported the
exemplary use of transition practices. Thirty-six percent of
the single-track principals compared to 27% of the single-
track principals reported these policies and practices as
present, but in need of revision.

Question 2

What organizational practices appear common to middle
schools operating on a year-round calendar?

Principals indicated a wide range of grouping strategies
pertaining to both middle schools and YRE scheduling. Of the
year-round schools surveyed, 79% reported the concurrent use
of two to six of the middle school schemes characterized,
while 85.4% of the principals reported the concurrent use of
two to seven of the YRE grouping and scheduling options
represented.

Middle school scheduling/grouping schemes

The use of grade-level interdisciplinary teams was
reported most frequently (74.2%) by school principals. Three
of the six scheduling/grouping strategies characterized were
reportedly used in over half of the schools, including core-
style grouping (60.6%), gradewide interdisciplinary teams
(59.1%), and school-with-a-school (53%). The use of
departmentalized teams, reported by 30.3% of the principals,
and long-term teams reported in use by 24.2% of the
respondents, represented the least frequently used schemes
characterized in the survey. Single-track and multi-track
principals reported a similar frequency of use for most of
the six scheduling and grouping schemes characterized in the
survey. Grade-level interdisciplinary teams were the most
commonly used scheme by both single-track and multi-track
programs as reported by 84% and 66% of the principals
respectively. The long-term team approach reflected the
second largest disparity in use between single-track and
multi-track programs. Twenty-four percent of the single-track
principals reported the use of this approach while 32% of the
multi-track principals reported employing this scheme.

YRE multi-track scheduling/grouping options

The most popular scheduling option employed by multi-
track middle schools were the exploratory/mini-courses, as
reported by 67.5% of the principals. Rainbow classes and
cross-grade scheduling were reported in use by 61% and 58.5%
of the principals from the study sample, respectively.

Slightly less than one-half (46.3%) of the multi-track principals also indicated the utilization of semester registration as a scheduling option while 43.9% reported the use of cross-track and single-semester scheduling options. Tracking was the least used of the scheduling/grouping schemes, reported in use by only 22% of the responding principals.

Question 3

What were the factors that principals reported as facilitating and constraining program implementation of a year-round schedule?

Multi-track program implementation

With the exception of two statements depicting program implementation on a multi-track schedule, principals expressed a diversity of opinions regarding a multi-track format and the middle school program design. Of the forty-one multi-track principals responding, three-fourths reported they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that lower enrollment and specialized programs were uncompromised by the flexibility allowed on a multi-track program. Three-fourths of the multi-track principals reported they agreed or strongly agreed that performing arts and extra-curricular programs require adjustments to ensure greater student participation.

A majority of the multi-track respondents reported they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the multi-track YRE curriculum was easily expanded beyond basic courses and

opportunities for elective courses exist. About half of the principals reported they disagreed or strongly disagreed that the sequencing of courses and course continuity are easily integrated within the curriculum on a multi-track schedule. Multi-track principals reported varied perceptions regarding the necessity of special mini-courses to fit year-round program implementation on a multi-track schedule, with more than one-third reporting they disagreed or strongly disagreed and over one-third reporting they agreed or strongly agreed.

Thirty percent of the multi-track principals reported they were undecided whether teachers were able to develop strong relationships with students in the shorter time periods for YRE in comparison to the traditional calendar. More than one-third indicated they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and over one-third reported they either agreed or strongly agreed. Forty percent of the principals either disagreed or strongly disagreed that teachers had expressed concerns about their ability to supervise and monitor make-up and remedial work during intersessions, while about one-third reported that they agreed or strongly agreed.

Facilitating and constraining factors of YRE programs

The most common benefit reported as a facilitating factor for program implementation was intermittent or periodic breaks. Benefits primarily associated with these vacation periods were reported to have reduced stress or burn

out in the multi-track schools, and improvement of school climate and morale in single-track schools.

Multi-track principals indicated that the school-within-a-school approach was facilitated by the tracking organization utilized. Specifically, this approach was reported as strengthening teaming organization, resulting in more cohesiveness among teams of teachers and between teachers and students.

Curricular and instructional benefits of YRE were reported by multi-track and single-track schools. Multi-track principals reported that instructional continuity was a primary facilitating factor in program implementation due to the absence of extended breaks that coincide with the traditional school calendar, and the remediation which occurs in intersessions. Single-track programs were reported to enhance the facilitation of learning opportunities for students through scheduling flexibility and program variations for students with different needs.

Scheduling difficulties were cited as a program constraining factor in both multi-track and single-track schools. Most notable was the restriction of elective or exploratory classes and specialized programs. The inflexibility of multi-track YRE scheduling seemed to manifest itself in instructional matters by limiting the effectiveness of teachers due to the frequent changing of students in elective or exploratory classes, inadequate

staffing between tracks, and teaching at multiple levels of student readiness.

Constraints on staff communication were reported by some multi-track principals. The fragmentation of off-track staff members was reported to restrict planning time and shared decision making.

Multi-track and single-track principals also indicated that personal stress for themselves and other 11 or 12 month personnel was caused by a lack of down time for them. Lengthening the school attendance calendar increased their administrative responsibilities.

In single-track schools, principals reported that articulation with high schools and other middle schools was problematic. The inability to interface with schools on traditional calendars created difficulties in summer attendance and for students who were making the transition back to a traditional school calendar.

Staffing constraints in single-track schools were described by some principals as a disadvantage of YRE. School-within-a-school programs had difficulties resulting from changing numbers of teachers in the schools. The need for extended or additional contracts to accommodate equitable elective offerings was also a limitation. In addition to the lack of teacher continuity, the isolation of teams or houses inherent in the concentration of functions within these organizational groups was reported to be disadvantageous.

Conclusions

One hundred twenty-seven principals were surveyed for the purpose of describing the various program-related, and organizational practices utilized by U.S. public middle schools that had implemented Year-Round Education (YRE) approaches. The data presented were based on the responses of sixty-six middle school principals during the 1993-94 school year. The findings of this study led to the following conclusions.

Middle School Program Practices

Principals' responses suggested that the use of middle school curriculum practices were not significantly impeded by year-round scheduling formats. However, principals reported that curricular flexibility, and teacher involvement in program development and design may have been restricted.

The principals' ratings of instructional organization practices implied that while these practices can be effectively implemented on a year-round calendar, there are restrictions in organizing broad team membership representation, common planning periods, and flexibility for regrouping students. Single-track principals reported a stronger use of three of the five instructional organization practices than the multi-track principals. Based on the findings of the study, it appears that middle school instructional organization practices were more compatible with a single-track format.

Teacher based homeroom/advisory groups and broad participatory based activities programs were found to be more prevalent among the four teacher guidance practices. Practices of teacher guidance that encourage long-term or extended teacher-student relationships, however, were reported absent by at least half of the principals. Based on the data reported in this study, the findings revealed that there was little difference in the reported use of teacher guidance practices between single and multi-track schools.

Middle school instructional methodology practices were used at an exemplary level by twelve percent or less of year-round middle school principals. Single-track principals reported greater frequencies of the exemplary use for the three instructional strategies than multi-track principals. One implication of this finding is that the single-track format permitted more flexibility in the use of varied instructional strategies than the multi-track format.

The middle school orientation and articulation practices were less prevalent in year-round middle schools than the practices of curriculum and instructional organization, but comparable to the levels of exemplary implementation for instructional methodology practices. Orientation and articulation practices, were reported to need revision more frequently than practices in the four other program domains. In this study, middle school orientation and articulation practices were reported at higher frequencies of exemplary use by multi-track principals than single-track principals.

Middle School/YRE Scheduling and Grouping Options

The findings revealed that year-round middle school programs implemented a variety of scheduling and grouping strategies that represented different levels of interpersonal support structure and teacher-subject specialization. The implication of this finding is that the diversity of adolescent developmental characteristics is a factor in developing year-round middle school programs, both between and within schools. Responses of multi-track principals suggested that a variety of scheduling options were used in multi-track middle schools in order to promote program flexibility and provide a variety of curricular opportunities for adolescent learners. The extensive use of those options suggested that a variety of scheduling options were needed for middle school program implementation on a multi-track calendar.

Perceptions of Principals Regarding YRE Program Implementation

Principals indicated that specialized programs in multi-track middle schools were compromised and, at best, required adjustments for effective implementation. Program articulation appeared to be problematic within many multi-track middle school programs, while others were able to articulate programs effectively within the multi-track design. The findings suggested that both instructional and interpersonal relationships may be constrained through the implementation of a multi-track design.

The periodic breaks implemented within YRE can be beneficial to student and teacher morale. The frequent periodic breaks experienced by teachers and students on multi-track YRE, however, were not beneficial to principals and other staff members who were responsible for coordinating and supporting program implementation and often led to increased stress for staff.

Communication difficulties resulting from a fragmentation of off-track staff members restricted planning time and shared decision making in some multi-track programs. The implications of communication difficulties in multi-track programs probably affected curriculum planning and development, planning of instructional organization strategies, and developmental assessments of students. The fragmentation of teacher groups found in school-within-a-school single-track programs, probably resulted from a lack of continuity in teaming and the isolation of teams or houses involved in concentrated functions. Multi-track principals, however, indicated that the multi-track format lent itself to the teaming organization through the school-within-a-school approach.

The findings of the study point out that the instructional program was primarily constrained by the inflexibility of multi-track YRE scheduling considerations. Single-track principals indicated that the single-track approach offered more flexibility in implementing the middle school instructional program than the multi-track approach,

because greater degrees of scheduling flexibility was available. Single-track schools experienced difficulties interfacing with schools on a traditional school calendars. As a result summer attendance was constrained and students often experienced difficulty making the transition from middle school YRE back to the traditional school calendar. These limitations might have resulted in further difficulties for individuals charged with responsibility of coordinating school-to-school activities and programs.

Implications

The findings of the study have implications for practitioners as well as researchers. A comparison of the middle school practices in multi-track and single-track programs indicates that YRE approaches must be viewed in the context of program design and implementation procedures that are employed.

Considerable disparities were reported between multi-track and single-track principals regarding the effective and exemplary use of certain organizational and instructional strategies. For example, the use of interdisciplinary team organization, common planning time for team members, teacher variation of the academic block schedule, and thematic or problem-centered units were found to be more prevalent in single-track schools than in multi-track schools. These findings suggest that the delivery of recommended features for the middle school curriculum and instructional program

are considerably restricted by a lack of scheduling
flexibility within multi-track programs.

Both single-track and multi-track year round schools
reported a lack of effective and exemplary teacher guidance
practices that would encourage long-term or extended teacher-
student relationships. The findings indicate that many
instructional programs were deficient in the development of a
strong interpersonal support structure for early adolescents,
a practice considered to be integral to the middle school
concept. Practices such as scheduling difficulties in the
multi-track programs and staffing constraints in the single-
track programs were reported to impede long-term or extended
teacher-student relationships. These results highlight the
need for more staff in both single-track and multi-track
schools in order to accommodate greater program offerings.

Program articulation was also reported to be problematic
for multi-track schools. The respondents indicated that the
increased stress placed upon principals and other 11 or 12
month staff members was largely attributable to their
responsibility for coordinating and sustaining program
implementation year-round, within and between schools.
Additionally, scheduling adjustments that required extensive
coordination so that administrative and instructional
personnel could enroll in specialized courses or programs was
reported to be difficult to implement. Clearly, YRE programs
require more preparation time and additional personnel, and
often result in increased stress for school personnel.

Schools planning to implement a multi-track YRE program will need to assess how they might best provide for staffing needs, program design and implementation in ways that are responsive to the purpose of early adolescent education. School personnel should carefully consider the overall educational benefits that might occur in comparison to the likelihood of increased operational costs.

<u>Recommendations</u>

The results of this study indicate that year-round middle schools exhibit a prevalent use of many recommended practices for the middle schools, but that they encounter organizational and program design concerns similar to those reported by year-round high schools. Since the findings presented reflect the sole opinions and perceptions of year-round middle schools principals, another study should be conducted to determine if perceptions of teachers, other certified personnel, and non-instructional personnel, are similar to those reported by principals.

Second, a study should be conducted to document the effects of specific practices in year-round schools as they compare to those practices used by schools on the traditional nine-month calendar. Many middle school educators are conducting school improvement processes to assess their programs and to determine whether or how to modify practices to promote more successful students (Epstein and MacIver, 1990). These data could serve as baseline information for comparisons and debates among educators, parents, and

advisory groups when considering YRE. The questionnaire that appears in Appendix J may also be useful for assessing present practices and initiating a discussion about options related to creating early adolescent programs which are aligned with school improvement and restructuring efforts.

Practices that reflected heterogeneous grouping strategies were reported to be highly prevalent by the principals. A subsequent investigation into year-round middle schools might focus on the methods utilized to accomplish this grouping of students, in order to determine the characteristics of these practices. Future research might identify practices that were related to particular attendance cycles, grade levels, school size, or socio-economic levels.

This study did not differentiate practices or perceptions based on school size or grade span. Another study might focus on how the size of school, grade span, and the use of organizational structures and different YRE approaches affect program designs as well as student and teacher experiences. Middle school practices are likely to be affected by organizational decisions that include how to deal with size and grade span in productive ways (Epstein and MacIver, 1990).

Further, in-depth studies should be conducted at local school programs to contrast with the findings observed in this descriptive national study. A better understanding of the intricacies and nuances of program implementation could

be gained through a qualitative study depicting organizational life in a year-round middle school. The study should be limited to single schools in order to develop greater specificity in the focus of the investigation and conceptual clarification.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to describe the various program-related, and organizational practices utilized by U.S. public middle schools that had implemented Year-Round Education (YRE) approaches. Principals of year-round middle schools indicated a prevalent use of five of 18 recommended middle schools practices and a wide range of organizational strategies pertaining to the grouping and scheduling of students and teachers both between and within schools. Respondents reported benefits and disadvantages that were similar to those found in year-round high school programs. Recommendations for practice and future research studies were discussed.

APPENDIX A
NAYRE MIDDLE GRADE SCHOOLS

Arizona

Cibecue Community
General Delivery
Cibecue, AZ 85911

Mohave Valley Junior High
P. O. Box 5070
Mohave Valley, AZ 86440

Crane Junior High
3175 S. 45th Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85364

California

El Rancho Middle
181 S. Del Georgio
Anaheim, CA 92808

Bell Bardens Intermediate
5841 Live Oak Street
Bell Gardens, CA 90201

Suva Intermediate
6660 East Suva
Bell Gardens, CA 90201

Big Bear Middle
P. O. Box 1607
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

Camerado Springs Middle
2480 Merrychase Drive
Cameron Park, CA 95682

Oak Hill Middle
P. O. Box 920
Clearlake, CA 95422

El Capitan Middle
10115 5th Street
Delhi, CA 95315

Earlimart Middle
P. O. Box 11970
Earlimart, CA 93219

Cone Valley Junior High
395 Ballentine Street
El Cajon, CA 92020

Marina Village Intermediate
1901 Francisco Drive
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

Marina Village Junior High
1901 Francisco Drive
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

Kerr Middle
8865 Elk Grove Boulevard
Elk Grove, CA 95614

Grant Middle
939 East Mission
Escondido, CA 92025

Farmersville Junior High
650 N. Virginia Street
Farmersville, CA 93223

Fillmore Middle
543 A Street
Fillmore, CA 93015

Folsom Junior High
500 Blue Ravine Road
Folsom, CA 95630

Hawthorne Intermediate
4366 W. 129th Street
Hawthorne, CA 90250

Yukon Intermediate
13838 S. Yukon Avenue
Hawthorne, CA 90250

Hesperia Junior High
10275 Cypress
Hesperia, CA 92345

Ranchero Middle
17607 Ranchero
Hesperia, CA 92345

Le Conte Middle
1316 N. Bronson Avenue
Hollywood, CA 90028

Gage Middle
3751 N. Bronson Avenue
Huntington Park, CA 90255

Nimitz Middle
6021 Carmelita Avenue
Huntington Park, CA 90255

Kerman Middle
151 S. First Street
Kerman, CA 93630

Elsinore Middle
1203 W. Graham
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

Terra Cotta Middle
29291 Robb Road
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

Del Sur School
9023 West Avenue, H
Lancaster, CA 93536

Gifford C. Cole Middle
6742 East Avenue, H
Lancster, CA 93535

Park View Intermediate
808 W, Avenue J
Lancaster, CA 93534

Piute Intermediate
425 East Ave. H-11
Lancaster, CA 93535

P.W. Engvall Middle
19th Ave. and Cedar Lane
Lemoore, CA 93245

Lennox Middle
11033 Buford Avenue
Lennox, CA 90304

Adams Middle School
151 W. 30th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90007

Berendo Middle
1157 S. Berendo Street
Los Angeles, CA 90006

Burbank Middle
6460 N. Figueroa street
Los Angeles, CA 90042

Carver Middle
4410 McKinley Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90011

Drew Middle
8511 Compton Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90001

Edison Middle
6500 Hooper Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90001

Forshay Middle
3751 S. Harvard Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90018

Mt. Vernon Middle
4066 West 17th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90019

Virgil Middle
152 N. Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90004

Hosler Jr. High
11300 Spruce Street
Lynwood, CA 90262

Menifee Valley Middle
26255 Garboni Road
Menifee, CA 92584

Elizabeth Ustach Middle
2701 Kodiak Avenue
Modesto, CA 95355

M. L. King Middle
P. O. Box 1031
Monterey, CA 93942

Marshall Upper
P. O. Box 1031
Monterey, CA 93942

Shivela Middle
Lincoln Avenue
Murietta, CA 92562

National City Middle
1701 D Avenue
National City, CA 91950

Oakdale Junior High
Maag Avenue
Oakdale, CA 95361

Roosevelt Middle
850 Sagewood Drive
Oceanside, CA 92056

Fremont Middle
1130 N. "M" Street
Oxnard, CA 93036

Haydock Middle
647 W. Hill Street
Oxnard, CA 93036

Maclay Middle
12540 Pierce avenue
Pacoima, CA 91331

Pacoima Middle
9919 Laurel Canyon
Pacoima, CA 91331

Hillview Middle
40525 Peonza Lane
Palmdale, CA 93551

Juniper Middle
39066 Palm Tree Way
Palmdale, CA 93551

Mesa Middle
3243 East Avenue, R-8
Palmdale, CA 93550

Pinacate Middle
1990 S. A Street
Perris, CA 92570

Benton Middle
264 N. Westwood
Porterville, CA 93257

Joe Walker Middle
5632 West Avenue, L-8
Quartz Hill, CA 93536

Arizona Intermediate
11045 Arizona Avenue
Riverside, CA 92503

Jackman Middle
7925 Kentwall Drive
Sacramento, CA 95823

Ruther Middle
7350 Palmer House Drive
Sacramento, CA 95828

Harden Middle
1561 McKinnon Street
Salinas, CA 93906

Toyon Middle
P. O. Box 1510
San Andreas, CA 95249

Shandin Hills Middle
4301 Little Mountain Drive
San Bernandino, CA 92407

Farb Middle
4880 La Cuenta Drive
San Diego, CA 92124

Mann Middle
4345 54th Street
San Diego, CA 92115

Memorial Junior High
2850 Logan Avenue
San Diego, CA 92124

Montgomery Junior High
2460 Ulric Street
San Diego, CA 92111

Wilson Middle
3838 Orange Avenue
San Diego, CA 92105

Fair Middle
1702 McLaughlin Avenue
San Jose, CA 95121

Carr Intermediate
2120 West Edinger
Santa Ana, CA 92704

Lathrop Intermediate
1111 South Broadway
Santa Ana, CA 92707

Sierra Intermediate
1901 North McClay
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Spurgeon Intermediate
2701 West 5th Street
Santa Ana, CA 92703

El Camino Junior High
219 W. El Camino Street
Santa Maria, CA 93452

Fishler Junior High
110 East Fisler
Santa Maria, CA 93454

South Gate Middle
4100 Firestone Boulevard
South Gate, CA 90280

La Presa Middle
1001 Leland Street
Spring Valley, CA 91977

Delta Sierra Middle
2255 Wagner Heights Road
Stockton, CA 95209

Morada Eastview Middle
5001 E. Eastview Drive
Stockton, CA 95212

Crystal Middle
100 Cordelia Street
Suisun City, CA 94585

Byrd Middle
9171 Telfair Avenue
Sun Valley, CA 91352

Sun Valley Middle School
7330 Bakman Avenue
Sun Valley, CA 91352

DeAnza Middle
2060 Cameron Street
Ventrua, CA 93001

Lincoln Middle
151 Escondido Avenue
Vista, CA 92084

Washington Middle
740 Olive Avenue
Vista, CA 92083

E.A. Hall Middle
201 Brewington Avenue
Watsonville, CA 95076

Rolling Hills Middle
130 Herman Avenue
Watsonville, CA 95076

Golden State Middle
1100 Carrie Street
West Sacramento, CA 95605

Winton Middle
P. O. Box 1299
Winton, CA 95388

Woodbridge Middle
18500 Lilac Street
Woodbridge, CA 95258

Park View Middle
34875 Tahoe Drive
Yucaipa, CA 92399

Florida

South Seminole Middle
101 S. Winter Park Drive
Casselberry, FL 32707

Landmark Middle
101 Kernan Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32225

Mandarin Middle
5100 Hood Road
Jacksonville, FL 32257

Parkway Middle
857 Florida Parkway
Kissimmee, FL 34743

Jackson Heights Middle
141 Academy Avenue
Oviedo, FL 32765

Tuskawilla Middle
1801 Tuskawilla Road
Oviedo, FL 32765

Indian Trails Middle
550 Tuskawilla Road
Winter Springs, FL 32708

North Carolina

West Lake Middle
4600 West Lake Road
Apex, NC 27502

Hendersonville Middle
930 9th Avenue, West
Hendersonville, NC 28739

Mooresville Middle
160 S. Magnolia Street
Mooresville, NC 28115

Newton-Conover Middle
221 West 26th Street
Newton, NC 28658

Texas

Leal Middle
743 W. Southcross
San Antonio, TX 78211

Salvador Sanchez Middle
321 North Rio Vista
El Paso, TX 79927

Socorro Middle
321 Bovee Road
El Paso, TX 79927

Wm. Slider Middle
11700 School Lane
El Paso, TX 79936

J. P. Elder Middle
709 N.W. 21st
Fort Worth, TX 76106

Kirkpatrick Middle
3201 Refugio
Fort Worth, TX 76106

Meadowbrook Middle
2001 Elderville
Fort Worth, TX 76103

W.C. Stripling Middle
2100 Clover Lane
Fort Worth, TX 76107

Lake Jackson Intermediate
P. O. Drawer Z
Freeport, TX 77541

University Middle
1820 Irving Lee Street
Waco, TX 76711

Utah

Cedar Ridge Middle
65 N. 200 W.
Hyde Park, UT 84318

South Cache Middle
29 N. 400 W.
Hyrum, UT 84319

Central Davis Junior High
663 Church Street
Layton, UT 84041

North Layton Junior High
1100 W. 2000 N.
Layton, UT 84041

Brockbank Junior High
2935 S. 8560 W.
Magna, UT 84044

Spring Creek Middle
350 West 100 N.
Providence, UT 84322

North Cache Middle
571 S. 200 W.
Richmond, UT 84333

Jefferson Junior High
5850 S. 5600 W.
Salt Lake City, UT 84118

Washington

Jemtegaard Middle
35300 E..Evergreen Blvd.
Washougal, WA 98671

APPENDIX B
LETTER TO DISTRICT YRE LIAISONS

LETTER TO DISTRICT YRE LIAISONS

John L. Ruis
Route 2, Box 308C
Hilliard, Florida 32046

Dear YRE Liaison:

    I am presently pursuing my dissertation project in the
doctoral program at the University of Florida. My research
will focus on the implementation of middle school programs on
year-round schedules. I need your help in identifying these
schools in your district so that I may contact them for
information regarding their educational programs.

    <u>Please complete the information on the form provided
pertaining to any middle or junior high school that employs a
year-round calendar in your district.</u> A self-addressed,
stamped envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.

    Your prompt reply and cooperation is greatly
appreciated.

                  Sincerely,

                  John L. Ruis

JLR/rf

APPENDIX C
FORM REPORTING INFORMATION FROM DISTRICT

FORM REPORTING INFORMATION FROM DISTRICT

School District_____

State   _____

YE Liaison   _____

School   _____   School   _____

Principal _____   Principal _____

Address   _____   Address   _____

          _____   _____

Grade Level(s)_____   Grade Level(s)_____

Telephone _____   Telephone _____

School   _____   School   _____

Principal _____   Principal _____

Address   _____   Address   _____

          _____   _____

Grade Level(s)_____   Grade Level(s)_____

Telephone _____   Telephone _____

School   _____   School   _____

Principal _____   Principal _____

Address   _____   Address   _____

          _____   _____

Grade Level(s)_____   Grade Level(s)_____

Telephone _____   Telephone _____

APPENDIX D
PANEL OF EXPERTS ASSISTING IN SURVEY DRAFT

PANEL OF EXPERTS REVIEWING SURVEY DRAFT

Dr. R. S. Archibald, CEO for the Cooperative Education Extension System of Florida and past president of NAYRE.

Dr. John Arnold, Associate Professor, Curriculum and Instruction - Middle Grades Education, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Mr. Norman Brekke, Superintendent of Oxnard School District, California, and past president of NAYRE.

Mr. Larry Horyna, Coordinator, Utah State Office of Education.

Dr. J. Howard Johnston, Chair, Department of Secondary Education, University of South Florida.

Dr. John Lounsbury, Professor, Georgia College, Milledgeville, Georgia.

Dr. C. Kenneth McEwin, Jr., Professor and Coordinator of Middle Grades Education, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina.

Dr. David J. Mussatti, Assistant Professor of Education, Sierra Nevada College, Incline Village, Nevada.

Dr. Chris Stevenson, College of Education and Social Services, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont.

APPENDIX E
LETTER TO EXPERTS ASSISTING IN SURVEY DRAFT

COVER LETTER TO EXPERTS REVIEWING SURVEY DRAFT

                                                          John L. Ruis
                                                      Route 2, Box 308C
                                              Hilliard, Florida 32046

Dear_____ :

     I am presently pursuing my dissertation project at the
University of Florida in the Department of educational
Leadership. My research, under the direction of Dr. Paul
George, will focus on the implementation of middle school
programs on year-round schedules. The study is intended to
examine middle school practices in conjunction with
curricular or scheduling adjustments as they apply to YRE
program implementation.

     Your help is needed and greatly appreciated in
validating the survey instrument to be used in this study.
As an expert in the field of middle school and/or Year-Round
Education, your suggestions would help yield more valid data
from the instrument.

     Please review the enclosed questionnaire and offer any
recommendations or suggestions that you may have. Return the
questionnaire and any other information you feel is pertinent
in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided for your
convenience. If you would like to contact me by telephone
regarding this study, please call at (904) 321-5801 during
the day, or (904) 879-1142 in the evening.

     Thank you in advance for your assistance.

                              Sincerely,

                              John L. Ruis

JLR/rf

APPENDIX F
FIRST DRAFT OF SURVEY INSTRUMENT

MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY OF YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMS

Name of School _____

School District/State _____

Name and Position of Respondent _____

_____

School Characteristics

1. What are the LOWEST and HIGHEST grade levels in your
    school? (Circle two choices below.)

    K   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12

2. Number of students currently enrolled in your school: ___

3. Number of years, including this year, your school has
    been organized to implement a middle school program: ____

4. Number of years, including this year, your school has
    been organized on a year-round calendar: _____

5. What type of calendar cycle or attendance period (e.g.,
    60-15, 45-15, etc.) is being implemented in your school?
    (Please also indicate whether cycle is single track of
    multi-track with the number of tracks)._____

    _____

    _____

Organization

Staffing, scheduling, and grouping practices are important considerations in program implementation. Please indicate how the following are used in your school by circling the number in the margin based on the scale below:

1 - absent or in need of complete revision

2 - present but in need of substantial improvement

3 - present but in need of some improvement

4 - present and up to standard

6. An interdisciplinary team organization where teachers share students, space, and schedules 1 2 3 4

7. Team membership represents all the basic academic subjects (i.e., English, Math, Science, Social Studies) 1 2 3 4

8. Organizational arrangements which encourage long-term teacher-student relationship (e.g., multi-age grouping, school-within-a-school, progressive teams, etc.) ..1 2 3 4

9. Common planning time for members of interdisciplinary teams 1 2 3 4

10. Flexible grouping strategies, primarily heterogeneous, within the classroom and across the school 1 2 3 4

11. Students remain with the same group of classmates throughout the day for their academic subjects 1 2 3 4

12. Flexible (perhaps block) scheduling such that today's class periods may be different in length from tomorrow's 1 2 3 4

13. Curricular flexibility accomplished through organizational arrangements in order to meet the needs of students (e.g., cross-tracking, cross-grading, rainbow-classes, etc.) 1 2 3 4

14. Opportunities for a teacher based homeroom/advisory program to meet regularly and often 1 2 3 4

15. Activities program that makes provisions for participation of all students (e.g., regularly scheduled rotating schedule, off-track participation 1 2 3 4

16. A continuous school improvement planning process in operation at the school 1 2 3 4

17. How well do your present organizational arrangements meet the needs of students in the middle grades? 1 2 3 4

Programs and Practices

The curriculum and instructional practices of the middle school reflect a combination of structure, balance and flexibility that emanate from the purposes of the school. Please indicate how the following are used in your school by circling the number in the margin based on the scale below:

    1 - absent or in need of complete revision

    2 - present but in need of substantial improvement

    3 - present but in need of some improvement

    4 - present and up to standard

18. A school program focused on three overall goals: academic learning, personal development, and group citizenship.

    ....1 2 3 4

19. A curriculum characterized by both a core academic focus and a broad range of exploratory/elective opportunities. 1 2 3 4

20. Exploratory or mini-courses for all students in all grades (6, 7, and/or 9) 1 2 3 4

21. Teams of teachers interrelate their separate subjects, coordinate major assignments, develop team units, etc. 1 2 3 4

22. Students assigned to the same homeroom or advisory teacher for all years in the middle grades 1 2 3 4

23. Program for gifted learners that provides additional learning opportunities in course-taking and choice in project work 1 2 3 4

24. Programs designed especially to meet the needs of at-risk students (e.g., educationally, economically disadvantaged, limited English-speaking abilities, migrant, Chapter I, etc.) and assimilate them into teaming arrangements 1 2 3 4

25. Students behind in their school work can receive special remedial during intersessions 1 2 3 4

26. Classes organized for cooperative learning where students earn group rewards for mastery of academic skills .1 2 3 4

27. Parents formally recruited and trained to work as school volunteers 1 2 3 4

28. Workshops offered to parents on school programs and early adolescence 1 2 3 4

29. Policies and practices that facilitate transition between the elementary and the high school program 1 2 3 4

30. How well do your present programs and practices meet the needs of students in the middle grades? 1 2 3 4

<u>YRE Considerations</u>

The following statements represent various points of view concerning YRE program implementation in secondary schools. Please indicate your level of agreement based on your school's implementation of the middle grade program on a year-round schedule based on the scale below:

> 1 - Strongly disagree
>
> 2 - Disagree
>
> 3 - Agree
>
> 4 - Strongly agree

31. Year-round programs tend to force the combination or elimination of lower enrollment, specialized programs (e.g., "singleton" courses can only be offered on one track) 1 2 3 4

32. Sequencing of courses and course continuity do not create serious curricular problems 1 2 3 4

33. Special mini-courses must be developed to fit year-round program implementation 1 2 3 4

34. Teachers find it difficult to develop a relationship with students in the shorter time periods for YRE 1 2 3 4

35. Teachers express concern over ability to supervise and monitor make-up and remedial work 1 2 3 4

36. Very few modifications are necessary to fit the curriculum to the year-round calendar 1 2 3 4

37. Performing Arts and activities programs suffer on a year-round schedule 1 2 3 4

38. Curriculum tends to be limited to basic courses and restrictive opportunities in elective courses 1 2 3 4

39. Summer tracks tend to have low enrollment, limiting curricular offerings and support of activity programs 1 2 3 4

40. Implementation of year-round programs is more difficult because of complex curricular organization and extracurricular activities 1 2 3 4

Reaction to Middle School / YRE Implementation

41. What are the benefits, in your opinion, of implementing the middle school program on a year-round schedule?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

42. What are the disadvantages, in your opinion? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!   PLEASE SEND ANY PRINTED
MATERIALS THAT COULD ASSIST ME IN INTERPRETING YOUR RESPONSES
FROM THE LIST BELOW.   CHECK THOSE YOU ARE SENDING.

_____   Calendar of Attendance Cycles

_____   Track Courses Schedules

_____   House and/or Team Assignments

_____   Course Offerings (Grade level, Track or Team)

_____   Course Registration Forms

_____   Organizational Charts or Diagrams

_____   Activities program Schedule

PLEASE FORWARD THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND ANY WRITTEN DOCUMENTS
TO:

        John L. Ruis

        Route 2, Box 3082

        Hilliard, Florida 32046

THANKS AGAIN !

APPENDIX G
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS FOR PILOT STUDY

COVER LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS IN PILOT STUDY

Route 2, Box 308C
Hilliard, Florida 32046
(904) 321-5801
January 19, 1994

Dear _____ :

I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership working on a dissertation under the direction of Dr. Paul George at the University of Florida.

The topic that I am investigating involves middle school program implementation and year-round scheduling. Specifically, I am examining the prevalence of middle grade program practices and curricular scheduling strategies as they apply to program implementation. Your assistance in this phase of the research is needed and will be appreciated.

This phase involves three tasks: 1) completing the enclosed questionnaire, 2) providing comments on the instrument's clarity, format, and the time it takes to compete, and 3) offering any comments or suggestions pertaining to the inclusion or exclusion of topics in the instrument. Please use the enclosed comment sheet for tasks 2 and 3 as described above, but feel free to make any comments on the questionnaire you think are important for enhancing the clarity of directions or content.

Please return the questionnaire and comment sheet in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

John L. Ruis

JLR/rf

Enclosures

APPENDIX H
SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR PILOT STUDY

MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY OF YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMS

Name of School: _____

School District/State: _____

Name and Position of Respondent - (Optional): _____

_____

<u>School Characteristics</u>

1. What are the LOWEST and HIGHEST grade levels in your
    school? (Circle two choice below.)

                  5   6   7   8   9

2. Number of students currently enrolled in your school:____

3. Number of years, including this year, your school has
    been actively seeking to implement a middle school grade
    program: _____

4. Number of years, including this year, your school has
    been functioning on a year-round calendar: _____

5. What type of calendar cycle or attendance period (e.g.,
    60-15, 45-15, etc.) is being implemented in your school?
    Please check below the type of calendar cycle or
    attendance period being implemented in your school.

    ( ) 45-15   ( ) Concept 6   ( ) Five-Track, Five Term Plan
    ( ) 60-20   ( ) Trimester Plan   ( ) Flexible all-Year Plan
    ( ) 60-15   ( ) Quarter Plan   ( ) Orchard Plan
    ( ) 90-30   ( ) Quinmaster Plan ( ) Other, Please describe
                                       _____
                                       _____

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6. Please indicate the attendance grouping system used to
    assign students for school attendance.

    ( ) Single-Track   ( ) Multi-Track   ( ) Other, Please describe

    _____

    _____

7. Number of tracks used in your school if you are on a
    multi-track schedule. _____

Middle School Programs and Practices

Middle school programs and practices reflect a
combination of structure, balance, and flexibility that
emanate from the purposes of the school. Middle school
programs are also housed in a variety of grade level
configurations for implementation. Although you may have
elementary and/or high school programs at your school site,
please indicate how the following are used in your school
from the perspective of the 6 - 8 middle grade program only,
by circling the number in the margin based on the scale
below:

    1 - absent

    2 - present, but in need of substantial revision

    3 - present and considered generally effective

    4 - present and considered exemplary

8. An interdisciplinary team organization where teachers
    share the same group of students, essentially common
    spaces, and are scheduled in a common block of time.

    ....1 2 3 4

9. Team membership represents the basic academic subjects
    (i.e., Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies) as
    well as teachers from the exploratory or elective areas
    ....1 2 3 4

10. Organizational arrangements which encourage long-term
    teacher-student relationship (e.g., multi-age grouping,
    student-teacher progression, etc.) 1 2 3 4

11. A common daily period provided for team members to plan
    ....1 2 3 4

12. Heterogeneous grouping strategies are employed within
    teams and across the middle grade program 1 2 3 4

13. Students remain with the same group of classmates for
    their academic subjects 1 2 3 4

14. Teachers readily vary the schedule within the academic
    block to accommodate instructional activities 1 2 3 4

15. Teacher based homeroom/advisory groups meet regularly
    (one or more times a week) 1 2 3 4

16. Activities program that makes provisions for
    participation by all students (e.g., regularly scheduled,
    rotating schedule, etc.) 1 2 3 4

17. A formal process exists for shared decision making, that
    involves teachers, administrators, and others in frequent
    and regular meetings. 1 2 3 4

18. A school program focused on three overall goals: academic
    learning, personal development, and group citizenship.
    ....1 2 3 4

19. A curriculum characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied 1 2 3 4

20. A broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences for personal growth and development (e.g., elective courses, independent or group projects, mini-courses, etc.). 1 2 3 4

21. Teams of teachers regularly carry out thematic and problem-centered units 1 2 3 4

22. Teams of teachers have at least some control over items like the schedule, the budget, and the curriculum .1 2 3 4

23. Students are assigned to the same homebase or advisory teacher for all years in the middle grades 1 2 3 4

24. Additional learning opportunities for gifted learners provided through course-taking or choice in project work. 1 2 3 4

25. The needs of at-risk students (e.g., educationally or economically handicapped, limited English-speaking abilities, etc.) are addressed through programs which include them in the teaming arrangements as much as possible. 1 2 3 4

26. Classes organized for cooperative learning where students earn group rewards for mastery of learning skills .1 2 3 4

27. Parents formally recruited and trained to work as school volunteers. 1 2 3 4

28. Workshops offered to parents on school programs and the nature of early adolescence 1 2 3 4

29. Policies and practices that facilitate transition both from the elementary school and to the high school. 1 2 3 4

Scheduling and Grouping Strategies

Various scheduling and grouping schemes may be utilized in order to provide appropriate curricular opportunities for middle grades and/or YRE programs. Please check below **ALL** that are used in your school and circle grade levels as applicable:

30. ( ) <u>Gradewide Interdisciplinary Teams:</u> Students and teachers are organized by grade levels in different parts of the school, most of the teachers will not share the same students.

   Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

   ( ) <u>Core Style Grouping:</u> Extended daily relationships for students with one teacher, balanced by instruction from other teachers who work together in interdisciplinary teams.

   Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

   ( ) <u>Grade Level Interdisciplinary Teams:</u> Teachers are organized according to the students they have in common, where one teacher typically teaches one subject to one grade level.

   Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Multi-Year or Long-Term Teams:</u> Teams are organized with teachers remaining with a group of students for the duration of the middle grades (e.g., multi-age grouping, student-teacher progression, etc.).
Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>School-Within-A-School:</u> School is divided into "houses" or subschools which are representative of the larger school, retaining the basic format of grade level teams.
Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Departmentalized Teams:</u> Teachers in the same subject specialization plan and teach together creating small and large group activities by combining and regrouping students.
Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Other (Describe):</u>

_____

_____

_____

_____

QUESTIONS 31 THROUGH 38 APPLY ONLY TO SCHOOLS ON A MULTI-TRACK SCHEDULE. IF YOU ARE ON A SINGLE-TRACK SCHEDULE, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 39.

31. ( ) <u>Tracking:</u> Specific ability or performance-based classes / programs are placed on one track.
Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Semester Registration:</u> Students are re-registered into year-long courses at the semester by scheduling year-long classes as two semester classes.

Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Rainbow classes:</u> Students from all tracks are scheduled into the same class so that more choices are available for students on all tracks.

Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Cross-Grading:</u> Classes offered on more than one grade level allowing more students to be scheduled into their first choice of electives.

Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Cross-Tracking:</u> Combining students from two tracks into a single class when registration is insufficient for a class on one track.

Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Single-Semester Scheduling:</u> Elective offerings on teacher's schedules are combined so that the same courses are taught in one semester rather than being offered alternately each semester, allowing more students to be scheduled into their choice of electives.

Circle grade levels in which you use: 6 7 8

( ) <u>Exploratory "Wheel" Scheduling:</u> Students are
scheduled into short duration exploratory courses that
are grouped together in order for students to have a
variety of curricular opportunities (e.g., exploratory
courses are six, nine, or twelve weeks in length).
Circle grade levels in which you use: 6   7   8

( ) <u>Other (Describe):</u>

_____

_____

_____

_____

Circle grade levels in which you use: 6   7   8

<u>YRE Program Considerations</u>

The following statements represent various points of view
concerning multi-track YRE program implementation in junior
high and high schools. Please indicate your level of
agreement based on your school's implementation of the middle
grade program on a year-round schedule based on the scale
below:

    1 - Strongly Disagree
    2 - Disagree
    3 - Agree
    4 - Strongly Agree

32. Multi-track year-round programs provide flexibility that
    allows lower enrollment, specialized programs to be
    uncompromised 1   2   3   4

33. Sequencing of courses and course continuity are easily integrated within the curriculum on a multi-track schedule 1 2   3   4

34. Special mini-courses are necessary to fit year-round program implementation on a multi-track schedule 1   2   3   4

35. Teachers are able to develop strong relationships with students in the shorter time periods for YRE as compared to the traditional school calendar. 1   2   3   4

36. The ability of teachers to supervise and monitor make-up and remedial work during intersessions is an expressed concern 1   2   3   4

37. Performing Arts and extracurricular activities programs require special adjustments to ensure greater student participation (e.g. rotating schedules, off-track participation, etc.) 1   2   3   4

38. Curriculum offerings on multi-track YRE tend to be limited to basic courses with restricted opportunities in elective courses 1   2   3   4

Reaction to Middle School / YRE Implementation

39. Please describe any major benefits of implementing the middle grades program on a year-round schedule as compared or contrasted to the traditional school calendar.

_____

_____

_____

_____

40. Please describe any disadvantages of implementing the middle grades program on a year-round schedule as compared or contrasted to the traditional school calendar.

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION! PLEASE SEND ANY PRINTED
MATERIALS THAT COULD ASSIST ME IN INTERPRETING YOUR RESPONSES
FROM THE LIST BELOW. CHECK THOSE YOU ARE SENDING.

_____ Calendar of Attendance Cycles

_____ Track/Course Schedules

_____ House and/or Team Assignments

_____ Course Offerings (Grade level, Track or Team)

_____ Course Registration Forms

_____ Organizational charts or diagrams

_____ Activities Program Schedule

PLEASE FORWARD THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND ANY WRITTEN DOCUMENTS
TO:

>   John L. Ruis
>   Route 2, Box 3082
>   Hilliard, Florida 32046

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is provided for your
convenience.

THANKS AGAIN !

MIDDLE SCHOOL/YRE SURVEY

Comment Sheet

Name: _____

Time to Complete:_____

Format:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Clarity:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please complete and forward by Friday, February 4, 1994.

Thank you very much for your help!

APPENDIX I
COVER LETTER FOR SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

COVER LETTER FOR SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Route 2, Box 308C
Hilliard, Florida 32046
(904) 321-5801

Dear Principal:

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Florida working on a dissertation under the direction of Drs. Paul George and Linda Behar.

The topic I am investigating involves the identification of prevalent middle school practices and scheduling strategies implemented in year-round education. In the initial phase of this study, middle school and year-round education practices were identified in a survey distributed to experts in the fields of middle grade and year-round education.

This phase of the study involves three tasks. Your assistance in this portion of the research would be appreciated. This survey should take no more than 20 minutes. First please complete Parts I - IV of the enclosed questionnaire. In Part I, please describe your school and respond to the questions that follow. In Part II, please indicate how each of the practices listed are used in grade 6-8 ONLY and use the following scale: (1) = absent; (2) = present but in need of revision; (3) = present and considered effective; and (4) = present and considered exemplary. In Part III, using the list of scheduling and grouping schemes shown, circle the grade levels to which they are applicable. In Part IV, based on your school's implementation of the middle grade program, please indicate your level of agreement using the following scale: (1) = strongly disagree; (2) = disagree; (3) = undecided; (4) = agree; and (5) = strongly disagree. In Part V, please describe the benefits or disadvantages of implementing a middle grade program on a year-round calendar, in comparison to the traditional calendar. Second, please send any printed materials including those listed below:

> Calendar of Attendance cycles
> Track / Course Schedules
> House and/or Team Assignments
> Course Offerings (Grade Level, Track or Team)
> Organizational Charts or Diagrams
> Activities Program Offerings

These items would be helpful to me in providing more information about your school.

Please complete the attached survey, include any printed materials, and return in the enclosed envelope within ten days. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

John L. Ruis

APPENDIX J
SURVEY INSTRUMENT ADMINISTERED TO STUDY SAMPLE

Survey of Year-Round Programs in the Middle Schools

PART I Directions: Please describe your school and respond to the questions below.

1. What are the LOWEST and HIGHEST grade levels in your school ? (Circle two choices below.)

   K   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12

2. Indicate the number of students currently enrolled in your school ._____

3. Indicate the number of years, including this year that your school has been actively seeking to implement a middle grades program in which practices such as interdisciplinary teaming, and an advisor/advisee program have been included.
   _____

4. Indicate the number of years, including this year that your school has been functioning on a year-round calendar: _____

5. Please indicate the attendance grouping system used to assign students for school attendance.

   ( )   Single-Track   ( )   Multi-Track   ( )   Other, please describe
   _____

6. If your school is on a multi-track calendar, indicate the number of tracks used.
   _____

7. Using the responses below, select the type of calendar cycle or attendance period being implemented in your school.

   ( ) 45 - 15   ( ) Concept 6   ( ) Five-Track, Five Term Plan
   ( ) 60 - 20   ( ) Trimester Plan ( ) Flexible All Year Plan
   ( ) 60 - 15   ( ) Quarter Plan   ( ) Orchard Plan Describe _____

PART II Directions: Please indicate how the following practices are used in your school in the 6 - 8 middle grades program ONLY and use the following scale: (1) = absent; (2) = present but in need of revision; (3) = present and considered effective; (4) = present and considered exemplary.

8. An interdisciplinary team organization is scheduled in a common block of time in common spaces.   1 2 3 4

9. Team membership represents the basic academic subjects (i.e., Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies) as well as teachers from the exploratory or elective areas.   1 2 3 4

10. There are organizational arrangements that encourage long-term teacher-student relationships, such as multi-age grouping, and student-teacher progression.   1 2 3 4

11. A common daily period is provided for team members to plan.   1 2 3 4

12. Heterogeneous grouping strategies are employed within teams and across the middle grades program. 1 2 3 4

13. Students are regrouped with different classmates for three or more classes during the school day. 1 2 3 4

14. Teachers vary the schedule within the academic block to accommodate instructional activities. 1 2 3 4

15. Teacher based homeroom/advisory groups meet regularly (one or more times a week) . 1 2 3 4

16. An activities program that provides for participation by all students is offered on a regularly scheduled basis. 1 2 3 4

17. The curriculum is characterized by a core academic focus where instruction is active and varied. 1 2 3 4

18. A broad range of exploratory opportunities that enhance experiences for personal growth and development (including elective courses, independent or group projects or mini-courses) is offered. 1 2 3 4

19. Teams of teachers carry out thematic and problem-centered units on a regular basis. 1 2 3 4

20. Teams of teachers have at least some control over the schedule, the budget, and the curriculum. 1 2 3 4

21. Students are assigned to the same homebase or advisory teacher for each year that they are enrolled in the middle school program. 1 2 3 4

22. Classes are organized into cooperative learning groups; students earn rewards for mastery of learning skills. 1 2 3 4

23. Parents are formally recruited and trained to work as school volunteers. 1 2 3 4

24. Workshops are offered to parents on school programs and the nature of early adolescence. 1 2 3 4

25. Policies and practices that facilitate transition both from the elementary school and to the high school exist. 1 2 3 4

PART III   Directions: Using the list of scheduling and grouping schemes shown below, circle the grade levels in which they are applicable to your school.

26. a. Students and teachers are organized by grade levels in different parts of the school; most of the teachers will not share the same students. 6 7 8

   b. Students have extended daily relationships with one teacher and balanced by instruction from other teachers who work together in interdisciplinary teams 6 7 8

   c. Teachers are organized according to the students they have in common; one teacher typically teaches one subject to one grade level. 6 7 8

   d. Multi-age grouping or student-teacher progression teams are organized so that teachers remain with a group of students for the duration of the middle grades. 6 7 8

   e. Our school is divided into "houses" or subschools which are representative of the larger school, that retains the basic format of grade level teams. 6 7 8

f. Teachers in the same subject specialization plan, and teach together. They create small and large group activities by combining and regrouping students.

6 7 8

g. <u>Other</u> (Please describe):

6 7 8

_____

_____

QUESTIONS 27 THROUGH 41 APPLY ONLY TO SCHOOLS ON A MULTI-TRACK SCHEDULE. IF YOU ARE ON A SINGLE-TRACK SCHEDULE, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 42.

27. Students are enrolled in specific ability or performance-based classes, programs are placed on one track.

6 7 8

28. Students are re-registered into year-long courses at the semester; year-long classes are scheduled as two semester classes.

6 7 8

29. Students from all tracks are scheduled into the same class so that more choices are available for students on all tracks.

6 7 8

30. Classes are offered on more than one grade level allowing more students to be scheduled into their first choice of electives.

6 7 8

31. Students are combined from two tracks into a single class when registration is insufficient for a class on one track.

6 7 8

32. Elective offerings are combined so that the same courses are taught in one semester rather than being offered alternately each semester, thus allowing more students to be scheduled into their choice of electives.

6 7 8

33. Students are scheduled into short duration exploratory courses which are 6, 9 or 12 weeks in length. Exploratory courses are grouped together in order for students to have a variety of curriculum opportunities.

6 7 8

34. <u>Other</u> (Please describe):

6 7 8

_____

_____

PART IV Directions: Based on your school's implementation of the middle grades program, please indicate your level of agreement using the following scale: (1) = strongly disagree; (2) = disagree; (3) = undecided; (4) = agree; (5) = strongly agree.

35. Multi-track year-round programs provide flexibility that allows for lower enrollment and specialized programs to be uncompromised.

1 2 3 4 5

36. Sequencing of courses and course continuity are easily integrated within the curriculum on a multi-track schedule.

1 2 3 4 5

37. Special mini-courses are necessary to fit year-round program implementation on a multi-track schedule.

1 2 3 4 5

38. Teachers are able to develop strong relationships with students in the shorter time periods for YRE in comparison to the traditional school calendar.

1 2 3 4 5

39. Teachers have expressed concerns about their ability to supervise and monitor make-up and remedial work during intersessions.

1 2 3 4 5

40. Performing Arts and extracurricular activities programs require special adjustments to ensure greater student participation such as, rotating schedules and off-track participation .

1 2 3 4 5

41. The multi-track YRE curriculum is easily expanded beyond basic courses and opportunities for elective courses exist.

1 2 3 4 5

PART V: Directions: Please respond to the statements below based on your experiences with Year-Round-Education.

42. Please describe the major benefits associated with implementing the middle grades program on a year-round schedule in comparison to the traditional school calendar.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

43. Please describe any disadvantages of implementing the middle grades program on a year-round schedule in comparison to the traditional school calendar.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NOTE: _If you would like to receive a copy of this data, please provide the following information:_

Name of Respondent and Position

_____

Name of School

_____

School District/State

_____

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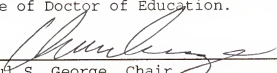
John Lamar Ruis is a native Floridian, born in Callahan on August 26, 1953. He graduated from Baldwin Junior-Senior High School, Baldwin, Florida, in 1971. In 1975, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in social studies education from Florida State University. He received the degree of Master of Education from the University of North Florida in 1980.

From 1975 to the present, Mr. Ruis held a variety of positions within the Nassau County, Florida, school district. He served as a social studies teacher, coach, athletic director, and assistant principal at Hilliard Middle-Senior High School between the years of 1975 and 1990. From 1990 to 1992 he served as principal at Callahan-West Nassau County High School. He is currently the superintendent of schools in Nassau County.

Mr. Ruis has three children, Marci, Joanna, and Bryce, and has been married for 16 years to the former Dorothy Milton of Hilliard, Florida.
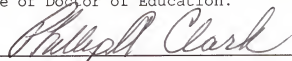
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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Paul S. George, Chair
Professor of Educational Leadership

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Linda S. Behar-Horenstein, Cochair
Assistant Professor of Educational
   Leadership

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Phillip A. Clark
Professor of Educational Leadership

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Ed Turner
Associate Professor of Instruction
   and Curriculum

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

May, 1995   _____
               Dean, College of Education

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Dean, Graduate School